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Andersen's Fairy Tales

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Andersen's Fairy Tales

Illustrated

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from the immortal literature of the world

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Preface

To Hans Christian Andersen might fitly be applied the title so happily bestowed by the natives of Samoa on Robert Louis Stevenson: Tusitala, the "Teller of Tales." For more than half a century the great Danish story-teller has been beloved by children in all parts of the world, and nowhere has he more devoted admirers than in Great Britain and those lands where English is the common tongue. As has been well said, "Andersen was a Norseman, and the blood of Norsemen is in our veins."

This series of books being chiefly designed for younger children, only those stories have been included which are most suitable for the purpose.

For those who here make first acquaintance with Andersen, it may be well to state that he was born at Odense, in the Baltic island of Funen, on April 2, 1805. His first fairy tales were published when he was about thirty years of age. "I have written them," he wrote to a friend, "just as if I were telling them to a child." That, no doubt, was the reason of his success, though as a matter of fact the stories were not at first at all highly regarded. Popularity came later, and he died, greatly honored, at his country house near Copenhagen on August 4, 1875.

H. G.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

The Little Swineherd or the Prince in Disguise

There was once a poor Prince: he had a kingdom, but it was a very little one; still it was large enough to marry upon, and to marry he was determined.

Now, it was rather bold of him to make up to the Emperor's daughter and say to her right out, "Will you have me?" Yet he did so, for his name was known far and wide, and there were hundreds of princesses who would have been very glad to say "Yes," if they had been asked. But did the Emperor's daughter do so? Well now, you shall hear.

On the grave of the Prince's father grew a rose-tree—a very lovely rose-tree! It only bloomed once in every five years, and then it only bore a single rose, but that was so sweet that by merely smelling it you forgot all your cares and sorrows. The Prince had also a nightingale which could sing as though all the lovely songs in the world were in its little throat. The Princess was to have both the rose and the nightingale, and that is how it came about that they were both put into silver cases and sent to her.

The Emperor had them borne before him into the large room where the Princess used to walk

and play at "visitors" with her ladies-in-waiting; and when she saw the cases, with the presents in them, she clapped her hands for joy.

"Only fancy if it were a little pussy-cat!" said she. But it turned out to be a rose-tree with a single beautiful rose.

"How prettily it is made!" said all the Court ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor. "It is genteel."

But the Princess felt the rose, and immediately was ready to burst into tears.

"Fie! Papa," said she; "it is not artificial after all, it is *real!*"

"Fie!" said all the Court ladies; "it is real!"

"Let us see what is in the other case before we lose our tempers," said the Emperor, and so the nightingale was produced, and it sang so sweetly that for the moment it was quite impossible to find any fault with it.

"*Superbe! Charmant!*" cried the Court ladies, for they all chattered French; it was hard to say which of them chattered worst.

"The bird reminds me of the late Empress's musical-box!" said an old courtier. "Ah, yes! it's just the same tune, and the same time."

"Yes," said the Emperor; and began to cry like a child.

"But it is not a real bird, I hope," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Indeed! then let it fly away!" said the Princess, and she would on no account hear of the Prince coming to see her.

But he was not to be rebuffed. He smeared his face all over with black and brown, pressed his cap down over his eyes, and knocked at the palace door.

"Good morning, Emperor!" said he. "Could I not take service in the palace here?"

"Well, there are so many applicants already," said the Emperor; "but let me see, I very much want someone who can look after the swine, for we have lots of them."

So the Prince was appointed the Imperial swineherd. They gave him a wretched little shed close to the pigstye, and there he had to live. The whole day long he sat and worked, and by evening had made a pretty little pipkin, with bells all round it, and as soon as ever the pipkin began to boil, the bells tinkled so prettily, and played the old melody—

"Ah! thou darling Augustine!
'Tis all over now, I ween!"

But the best of it was that when one held one's fingers in the steam that came out of this pot one could immediately smell what was being cooked on every hearth in the town. Now, that was certainly something very superior to a rose.

And now the Princess came walking along with her ladies-in-waiting, and when she heard the melody she stood still, and was delighted, for she

also could play "Ah! thou darling Augustine!" It was indeed the only tune she knew, but she played it with one finger.

"Yes," she said, "that is the song that I can play. He must indeed be a clever swineherd. Go in and ask him what the instrument costs."

So one of the maids of honor was obliged to go down into the shed, but she put on pattens first.

"What do you want for that pipkin?" asked the maid of honor.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Good gracious!" said the maid of honor.

"Yes, I will not take less," said the swineherd.

"Well, what does he say?" asked the Princess.

"I really dare not tell you," said the maid of honor, "it is too frightful!"

"Then whisper it in my ear." So she whispered.

"He is very naughty, really!" said the Princess, and turned away at once; but when she had gone a little distance the bells jingled again so sweetly:—

"Ah! thou darling Augustine!
'Tis all over now, I ween!"

"Listen now!" said the Princess, "ask him if he will take ten kisses from my Court ladies."

"No, thank you!" said the swineherd; "ten kisses from the Princess, please, or I shall keep the pipkin!"

"How very tiresome, to be sure!" said the Prin-

cess. "Well, then, stand all of you in front of me, so that nobody can see!"

So all the Court ladies made a circle round them, spreading out their dresses; and the swineherd got the ten kisses, and the Princess the pipkin.

And now indeed they had a merry time of it. All that evening, and the whole of the next day, the pipkin was kept a-boiling. There was not a hearth in the town but they knew what was being cooked there, whether it was the Lord Chamberlain's or the cobbler's. The Court ladies danced and clapped their hands.

"We know who is going to have soup and pancakes for dinner, and who is going to have chops and hasty-pudding. How interesting that is!"

"Most highly interesting!" said the Lady Stewardess of the Household.

"Yes; but hold your tongues about it, for I am the Emperor's daughter!"

"Of course, of course!" said they all.

The swineherd, that is to say, the Prince—but *they* of course thought he was a real swineherd—let not a day pass without making something or other; and at last he made a rattle, and when one sprang this rattle, one heard all the waltzes, jigs, and polkas that ever were known since the creation of the world.

"Why, that is *superbe!*" said the Princess, as she passed by, "I have never heard a finer composition! Listen now! Just go and ask him what

the instrument costs. But mind, I will give no more kisses!"

"He wants a hundred kisses from the Princess!" said the maid of honor who had been to ask.

"I think he is mad!" said the Princess, and she went on her way, but when she had gone a little distance she stood still. "After all, one should encourage the fine arts," said she. "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall have ten kisses as before; he can take the rest from my Court ladies."

"But we do not care about that!" said the Court ladies.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the Princess. "If I can kiss him surely you may. Remember, I give you board and wages!" So the maid of honor had to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess," said he, "or everyone keeps his own!"

"Stand around us then!" said the Princess, and so all the Court ladies did as they were bid, and he up and kissed her.

"What is the meaning of all that commotion by the pigstye yonder?" asked the Emperor, who had stepped out upon the balcony; and he rubbed his eyes, and put on his spectacles. "Why, if it isn't the Court ladies! They are playing some sort of game. I must go down to them." So he put on his slippers, and pulled them up behind, for they were shoes he had worn down at heel.

My goodness! what a hurry he was in.

As soon as he came into the courtyard, he walked very sortly, and the Court ladies had so much to do with counting the kisses, so that it might be a perfectly fair bargain, and the swineherd might not get too many or too few, that they never observed the Emperor.

He raised himself on tiptoe. "Why, what's this?" said he, when he saw them kissing, and with that he beat them about the head with his slipper just as the swineherd had got his six-and-eightieth kiss.

"Be off with you, out of my sight!" said the Emperor, for he was very angry, and both the Princess and the swineherd were expelled from his domains.

There she stood now a-weeping; the swineherd cursed and the rain poured down in torrents.

"Alas! wretched creature that I am!" said the Princess; "if only I had taken that nice Prince! Alas! how miserable I am!"

Then the swineherd slipped behind a tree, wiped all the black and brown from his face, threw away his nasty clothes, and stepped forward in his princely raiment, looking so handsome that the Princess could not but curtsey.

"I have come to scorn you," said he. "You would not have an honest Prince! You could not appreciate roses and nightingales, but you could kiss the swineherd for a foolish toy! Take it, then, and much good may it do you!"

So he returned to his kingdom, shut the door behind him, and barred and bolted it, and she was left outside to sing:—

"Ah! thou darling Augustine!
'Tis all over now, I ween!"

The Nightingale

In China you know very well, of course, the Emperor is Chinese and all those about him are Chinese also. It happened many years ago, but just for that very reason the story is worth hearing before it is forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most gorgeous in the world; it was built entirely of the finest porcelain and was very costly, but so brittle that one had always to take particular care not to touch it. In the garden were the most wonderful flowers, and to the most beautiful of them were tied silver bells which rang whenever anybody passed by lest they should miss seeing the flowers. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was extremely beautiful, and the garden itself stretched so far that the gardener himself did not know where it ended.

If one walked far in it, one came to the loveliest wood, with lofty trees and deep lakes. The wood ran down to the sea, which was deep and blue; large ships could sail under the branches and in one of these branches dwelt a nightingale which sang so sweetly that even the poor fisherman, who had many other things to attend to, would stop to listen when he went out at night to drag up his

nets. "How beautiful it is!" he said, but then he had to see to other things and so forgot the bird. Yet, next night, when it sang again, and the fisherman came thither, he was sure to say the same thing: "How beautiful it is!"

Travelers came from all parts of the world to see and admire the Emperor's city and the palace and the garden. But when they heard the nightingale they said, "Yes, that is better than all!"

And the travelers when they got home related what they had seen, and the learned wrote many books about the city and the palace and the garden. But they did not forget the nightingale; indeed, they put that first, and those who could write poetry penned the loveliest verses about the nightingale in the wood by the deep blue lake.

These books went the round of the world and some of them in course of time reached the Emperor. He sat on his gold throne and read and read. Every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him to read the fine descriptions of the city, and the palace and the garden. "But when all is said, the nightingale is still the best of all!" said the books.

"Why, what is this?" said the Emperor—"the nightingale! I do not know of any nightingale! I had no idea there was such a bird in my kingdom, let alone in my very garden! Must one learn such things from books? This must be looked into."

So he called his lord-in-waiting, who was so

very grand that whenever any one lower in rank than himself presumed to speak to him or to ask a question he only answered, "P!" which meant nothing at all.

"There is said to be a very remarkable bird called a nightingale!" the Emperor informed him; "people declare that it is the finest thing in my vast realm. Why have I not been told about it?"

"I have never heard it so much as mentioned before;" replied the lord-in-waiting; "it has never been presented at Court!"

"I command it to come here this very evening and sing to me," said the Emperor. "Why, the whole world knows what I possess and yet *I* don't know it!"

"I never heard the name of it before!" said the lord-in-waiting, "but I will have inquiries made and find it!"

But where was it to be found? The lord-in-waiting ran up and down all the staircases in the palace and through all the rooms and corridors, but of the people he met not one knew about the nightingale. So the lord-in-waiting came back to the Emperor and said the whole thing must be a fable invented by those who wrote books. "Your Imperial Majesty must not believe what you find written there. It is all invention and something else which they call the Black Art!"

"But the book in which I read this was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan," said the Emperor, "and therefore it cannot be an

untruth. I wish to hear the nightingale! It must be here this evening! I accord it my most gracious favor! And if it does not come the whole Court shall be trampled on directly it has eaten its supper!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the lord in-waiting, and again he ran up and down all the stairs, through all the rooms and corridors, and half the Court ran with him, for they did not like the idea of being trampled on. There was a universal inquiry about the wonderful nightingale which was known to all the rest of the world but to nobody at Court.

At last they found a poor little girl in the kitchen and she said, "What! the nightingale! Why, I know it quite well! Sing? I should think so! Every evening I take the dinner-leavings to my poor sick mother who lives by the sea-shore, and when I am coming back and am tired and rest in the wood I hear the nightingale sing, and then the tears come into my eyes and it is just as if my mother were kissing me!"

"Little scullery-maid!" said the lord-in-waiting, "I will get you a permanent situation in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor eat, if you will lead us to the nightingale, for it is to have an audience this evening."

So they went together to the wood where the nightingale was wont to sing. Half the Court was there. As they picked their way along a cow began to low.

"Oh!" said the lord-in-waiting, "now we have it! That is really a remarkable power for so smal

an animal! Of course, we have heard it before. We remember it distinctly!"

"No! that is the lowing of the cows!" said the little scullery-maid; "we are still a long way from the place!"

And now the frogs croaked in the marshes.

"Pretty!" said the Chinese Court chaplain, "now I hear it; 'tis just like tiny temple bells."

"Nay, those are the frogs!" said the little scullery-maid, "but I think we shall hear it very soon."

Then the nightingale began to sing.

"That's it!" said the little girl. "Listen! listen! And look! there it sits"; and she pointed to a little gray bird in the branches.

"Is it possible!" said the lord-in-waiting. "I never imagined it was like that! How very simple it looks! It is a little off color, no doubt, at being visited by so many distinguished persons!"

"Little nightingale!" cried the scullery-maid loudly, "our gracious Emperor wants you to sing to him so much!"

"With the greatest pleasure!" said the nightingale, and sang so that it was a delight to listen.

"It is like crystal bells!" said the lord-in-waiting, "and just look how the little throat moves up and down. It is really remarkable. We have never heard it before. It will have a great success at Court!"

"Shall I sing to the Emperor once more?" asked the nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was one of the party.

"My excellent little nightingale!" said the lord-in-waiting, "it is my privilege to invite you to a great entertainment at Court this evening, where you will enchant his high Imperial Majesty with your charming voice!"

"It sounds best in the green woods," said the nightingale, but it willingly went with them when it heard that the Emperor wished it.

There were grand doings at the palace. The porcelain walls and floor shone with thousands of gold lamps, the loveliest flowers were set up in the corridors, and there was such a running about and such a draught that all the bells rang so much that you could not hear the sound of your own voice.

In the middle of the large room where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed for the nightingale to sit upon. The whole Court was there and the little scullery-maid had leave to stand behind the door, for she was no longer merely a temporary but a real scullery-maid. Everybody wore their most gorgeous finery and all turned their eyes to the little gray bird when the Emperor nodded to it.

Then the nightingale sang so beautifully that tears came into the Emperor's eyes and trickled right down his cheeks. Presently it sang more beautifully than ever, so that the notes seemed to go to the very heart; and the Emperor was so delighted that he said the nightingale should have his gold slipper to wear round its neck. But the

nightingale declined with thanks; it had been rewarded enough already, it said.

"I have seen tears in the eyes of the Emperor, and that is the most precious treasure to me. An Emperor's tears have a wonderful power. God knows I have been rewarded enough"; and it sang again with its sweet, heavenly voice.

"That is the most captivating coquetry we know of," said all the ladies who were present, and they put water in their mouths so as to be able to cluck and gurgle when anyone spoke to them. They fancied they, too, were nightingales then; nay, the footmen and waiting-maids themselves said that they were satisfied, and that is a great deal, for they are always the most difficult to please. Yes, the nightingale's success was complete.

It was now to remain at Court, and to have its own cage and the privilege of walking out twice in the daytime and once at night. It was attended by twelve servants, each of whom tied a silk ribbon round its leg and held on fast. There was not very much enjoyment in such a walk as that!

The whole town talked about the remarkable bird and whenever two persons met, one of them immediately said to the other, "Night!" and the other said "gale!" and then they sighed and understood each other; nay, eleven chandlers' children were called after it, but not one of them had a single musical note in his whole composition.

One day a large packet arrived for the Emperor

and on the outside of it was written, "The Nightingale!"

"Here now we have a new book about our famous bird!" said the Emperor; but it was not really a book but a little work of art, which lay in a box, an artificial nightingale which had been made to resemble the living one, but was covered all over with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. As soon as you wound up this artificial bird it could sing one of the pieces the real nightingale sang, and then its neck moved up and down and all the gold and silver on it sparkled. Round its neck was a little ribbon and on this was written: "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor compared with that of the Emperor of China!"

"That is very pretty!" said they all, and he who had brought the artificial bird immediately received the title of Chief-Imperial-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now the two must sing together," said the courtiers. "What a duet it will be!"

But it would not do at all, for the real nightingale sang in his own way and the artificial bird went by clockwork. "I have no fault to find with it," said the music master; "it's time is perfect and quite of my school!" So the artificial bird had to sing alone. It was just as successful as the real one and much prettier to look at besides; it glistened like bracelets and breast-pins.

Three and thirty times it sang one and the same piece and yet wasn't tired. The people would have

liked to hear it all over again, but the Emperor thought that the living bird ought now to sing a little—but how was this? Nobody had noticed that it had flown out of the open window back to its green woods.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing!" said the Emperor, and all the courtiers stormed and declared that the nightingale was a most ungrateful creature.

"At any rate we have still the best bird," they said, and so the artificial bird had to sing again, and that made the four and thirtieth time they had heard the same piece. But even now they did not know all of it, it was so very difficult. The music master praised the bird above measure, maintaining that it was better than the real nightingale, not only with regard to its clothes and the many beautiful diamonds, but also as to its own merit.

"For look now! your Imperial Majesty, and you also, ladies and gentlemen, as regards the real nightingale you can never tell for certain what will come, but as regards the artificial bird everything is fixed and definite. Thus 'twill be and not otherwise. You can explain all about it. You can open it and display the ingenuity of man. You can see the position of the various parts, how they work and how they follow one after the other!"

"Those are exactly my own thoughts!" said all present, and the music master got leave to show the bird to the people on the following Sunday.

"They also shall hear it sing," said the Emperor.

And hear it they did and were as pleased as if they had been to a tea party and drunk lots of tea, for that is the proper thing to do in China. They all said, "Oh!" and held up their forefingers and nodded; but the poor fisherman who had heard the real nightingale said, "It sounds nice enough, but there is something wanting. I know not what!"

The real nightingale was banished from the realm.

The artificial bird was placed on a silk cushion close by the Emperor's bed; all the gifts it had received, both of gold and precious stones, lay round about it, and, as to titles, why, it had risen to be "High-Imperial-Night-Singer" and in rank was No. 1 on the left side, for the Emperor reckoned that side to be the nobler on which the heart lay, and even in an Emperor the heart lies on the left side. And the music master wrote five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird; his treatise was long and learned and full of the hardest Chinese words, and all the people said they had read and understood it, for otherwise they would have been considered stupid and been trampled upon.

A whole year passed. The Emperor, the Court and all the other Chinese knew by heart every little cluck in the artificial bird's song, but just for that reason they liked it all the better; they

could sing it, too, and they did so. The street-boys sang, "Zee-zee-zee! kluk-kluk-kluk!" and the Emperor sang it. Yes, indeed, it was really charming!

But one evening, while the artificial bird was singing its best and the Emperor was lying in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said "sooop" and something went "muurrrr!" All the wheels ran round and the music stopped.

The Emperor at once sprang out of bed and sent for his physician, but what could *he* do! Then he had the watchmaker fetched and after a good deal of talking and peeping, he put the bird somewhat to rights, but he said they must spare it as much as possible, for the machinery was so worn that it was not possible to supply new works which could be relied upon to go with the music. It was a great grief! Only once a year could the artificial bird be allowed to sing and they were very strict about it even then; but the music master made a little speech full of hard words and said that it was just as good as before, and so it *was* just as good as before.

Five years had now passed and the whole land was bowed down by a great sorrow, for, at heart, they were all devoted to their Emperor, and now he was sick and could not live, it was said. A new Emperor had already been chosen and the people stood in the street and asked the lord-in-waiting how their Emperor was.

"P!" said he and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his large and gorgeous bed. The whole Court thought he was

dead and everyone ran to greet the new Emperor; the valets ran away to talk about it, and the palace serving-maids had company to a large coffee-party. Cloth coverings were strewn about the rooms and corridors so that people might walk softly and therefore it was still, oh, so still. But the Emperor was not dead yet; stiff and pale he lay in his gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels. High above a window stood open and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was as if someone were sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes and saw that it was Death who sat upon his breast and had taken up his gold crown and held in one hand the Emperor's golden sabre and in the other his splendid banner. And round about the folds of the large velvet bed-curtains strange-looking heads peeped forth, some quite ugly and others sweet and gentle; they were the Emperor's good and evil deeds gazing at him now that Death was at his heart.

"Music, music!" cried the Emperor, "the big Chinese drum, that I may not hear what they say!"

But the figures remained and Death nodded, just like a Chinese man.

"Music, music!" shrieked the Emperor, "you charming little gold bird, sing, sing, pray do! I have given you gold and precious things; I myself have hung my gold slipper round your neck. Sing, I say, sing!"

But the bird remained silent; there was none to wind it up and it never sang otherwise. And Death kept on looking at the Emperor, and all was so still, so frightfuly still.

At that very instant the most beautiful song sounded close by the window. It came from the little living nightingale which sat upon the branch outside. It had heard of the Emperor's sore need and had therefore come to sing hope and comfort to his soul, and as it sang the shapes round the bed grew paler and paler, the blood passed more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs and Death himself listened and said, "Go on, little nightingale, go on!"

"Yes; but will you give me the splendid gold sabre? Will you give me the rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave away all these treasures for a song and the nightingale kept on singing. It sang of the silent churchyard where the white roses grow, where the elderberry tree scents the air and where the fresh grass is wet with mourners' tears. Then Death felt a longing for his garden and swept out of the window like a cold white mist.

"Thanks, thanks!" said the Emperor, "you heavenly little bird! I know you well. 'Twas you I drove out of my realm and yet you have sung the evil visions away from my bedside! How can I reward you?"

"You *have* rewarded me," said the nightingale. "I drew tears from your eyes the first time I sang,

that I shall never forget; those are jewels which rejoice a singer's heart. But go to sleep now and get well and strong! I will sing to you!"

As it sang the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep, such a soft, refreshing sleep.

The sun was shining in upon him through all the windows when he awoke, strong and hale. Not one of his servants had yet come back, for they fancied he was dead, but the nightingale still sat and sang.

"You must stay with me always!" said the Emperor; "you shall only sing when you like and I will break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

"Don't do that!" said the nightingale, "after all, it did what it could. Keep it as before. For myself, I cannot fix my abode in the palace, but let me come when I have a mind to and then I will sit on this branch near the window in the evening and sing to you and so make you thoughtful and happy at the same time. I will sing of those who rejoice and of those who suffer. I will sing of the good and the evil which go on around you and yet are hid from you. The little songbird flies far and wide. He flies to the poor fisherman, to the roof of the husbandman, to every one who is far from you and your Court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown also has an air of sanctity about it. I'll come, I'll sing to you—but one thing you *must* promise me!"

"I'll promise you everything," said the Emperor, and there he stood in his Imperial robes,

which he had put on himself, and he held his sabre, which was heavy with gold, to his heart.

"One thing I beg of you! Tell no one that you have a little bird which tells you everything and things will be better for you."

And away the nightingale flew.

The servants came in to see their dead Emperor. Yes, there they all stood, and how amazed they were when the Emperor said, "Good morning!"

The Steadfast Tin Soldier

There were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they were made out of the same old tin ladle. They shouldered their muskets, looked straight before them, and wore a smart red and blue uniform.

The first thing they heard in this world when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay were the words, "Tin soldiers!" A little boy said that and clapped his hands; they had been given to him because it was his birthday, and he now set them out on the table. Each soldier was the exact image of all the others—at least only one of them was a little different. He had only one leg, for he had been molded last of all, and there was not tin enough left to give him two legs. Yet he stood as firmly on his one leg as the others did on two legs, and it was just this particular soldier who was to become remarkable.

On the table where they were set out stood a lot of other toys, but what struck the eye most was a pretty paper palace. You could see right into the rooms through the little windows. Outside stood small trees round about a little mirror which was meant to represent a lake, and wax swans swam on the surface, which reflected back

their image. It was all very pretty, but prettiest of all was certainly a little maid who stood at the open palace door; she also was cut out of paper, but she had a skirt of the brightest linen, and a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders like a scarf, and in the middle of this was a glistening spangle as large as her whole face. The little maid stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then she lifted one of her legs so high in the air that the tin soldier could not make out what had become of it, and fancied that she had only one leg, like himself.

"That's the wife for me!" thought he; "but she's a great beauty; she lives in a palace, while I have only a box, and there are five-and-twenty of us there, so it is not the place for her! Still I'll try to make her acquaintance!" So he laid himself at full length behind a snuff-box that happened to be on the table; thence he could peep at the nice little lady who kept on standing on one leg without losing her balance.

When it was evening all the other tin soldiers were put back in their box, and the people of the house went to bed. And now the toys began to play among themselves; they played at visitors, and at warfare, and they had a ball. The tin soldiers rattled in the box, for they wanted to join in the fun, but they could not lift the lid off. The nut-crackers turned somersaults, and the pencil cast up accounts on the slate. There was such a racket that the canary awoke and began to pipe, and in verse too! The only two who did not move

from their places were the tin soldier and the little dancing girl. She remained erect on the tips of her toes, with both arms stretched wide out; he was just as steadfast on his one leg, and never took his eyes off her fror an instant.

And now the clock struck twelve, and crack! up flew the lid of the snuff-box; there was no snuff in it, only a little black gnome, for the box was a puzzle.

"Tin soldier," cried the gnome, "will you keep your eyes to yourself?"

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Wait till the morning, that's all!" said the gnome.

Now when it was morning and the children came up to the nursery the tin soldier was placed close to the window, and whether it was the gnome or a draught of air I don't know, but the window all at once flew open, and the soldier fell out, head over heels, from the third storey into the street below. It was a frightful flight. His one leg was right up into the air, and he stood on his helmet with his bayonet sticking in between the flagstones.

The maid-servant and the little boy immediately came downstairs to look for him, but though they very nearly trod upon him they did not see him. If the tin soldier had cried out: "Here am I!" they certainly would have found him, but he did not consider it right and proper to ask for help, because he was in uniform.

And now it began to rain; the drops fell thicker

and thicker until it poured. When the shower was over two street-boys came that way.

"Look!" cried one, "there's a tin soldier; let's give him a sail!"

So they made a boat out of a newspaper, put the tin soldier in the middle, and down the gutter he went sailing, while both boys ran along by the side, clapping their hands.

What billows there were in that gutter! And the current too! it was dreadful! Yes, the rain had poured in torrents, and no mistake! The paper boat rocked up and down and spun round and round till the tin soldier was quite dizzy; but he remained steadfast all through, never changed countenance, looked straight before him, and shouldered arms.

All at once the boat went right under a long gutter-coping; it grew as dark as in his box.

"Where on earth am I going now!" thought he; "yes, it is all the gnome's fault. Ah! if only the little dancing maid were sitting here in the boat it might be as dark again if it liked and I should not care!"

The same instant up came a large water rat who lived under the gutter-coping.

"Have you a pass?" asked the rat. "Come! out with your pass!"

But the tin soldier kept silence and shouldered arms still more firmly.

Off went the boat, with the rat close behind it. Ugh! how it gnashed its teeth, crying, "Stop him!

stop him! He hasn't paid the toll, and he hasn't shown his pass!"

But the stream grew stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already see the bright daylight in front where the coping ended, but he heard at the same time a roaring sound which might well have made even the bravest man afraid. Only fancy! where the coping ended the gutter plunged right down into a large channel, which would be as dangerous to the tin soldier as sailing down a large waterfall would be to us. He was already so close to the precipice that he could not stand. The boat dashed on, the poor tin soldier stood as stiff as he could, that nobody should say of him that he so much as blinked his eyes. The boat whirled round four times, and filled with water to the very brim. Sink it must! The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water, and deeper and deeper sank the boat; the paper became quite undone; now the water closed right over the soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little dancing girl whom he should never see again, and these lines rang in his ear:

"On, soldier! on—on—though swords and shots rattle,
'Tis thy fate to find death in the midst of the battle."

And now the paper burst in the middle, the soldier fell through, and the same instant was swallowed by a huge fish.

How dark it was inside there! Worse even than

the gutter-coping; and the space was so narrow too. But the tin soldier remained steadfast, and lay at full length shouldering arms.

The fish frisked about, leaping and darting in the most frightful manner. At last, however, it became still, and what looked like a flash of lightning seemed to dart through it. The light shone quite brightly, and someone cried aloud: "Tin soldier!"

The fish had been caught, carried to market, sold, and taken to the kitchen, where the maid-servant had cut it open with a large knife. She took the soldier round the waist between her finger and thumb and carried him to the parlor, to which everyone hastened to look at the remarkable man who had traveled about inside a fish.

Yet the tin soldier was not a bit proud. They placed him on the table, and there—how strangely, to be sure, things come about in this world!—the tin soldier found himself in the self-same room he had been in before; he saw the self-same children, and the same playthings stood upon the table; the beautiful palace with the pretty little dancing girl was there too, and she still stood on one leg and held the other in the air; she, too, was steadfast. The tin soldier was quite touched; he could have shed tin tears, but this would not have become him. He looked at her and she looked at him, but neither said a word.

Then one of the little boys took up the tin soldier and threw him right into the stove. He gave

no reason whatever for doing so; no doubt the gnome in the snuff-box was at the bottom of it.

The tin soldier stood lighted up by the flames and felt a frightful heat, but whether it was the actual heat of the fire or the heat of his love he did not know. His bright colors had all faded, but whether in consequence of his journey or of his heartache nobody could say. He looked at the little maid and she looked at him, and he felt in quite a melting mood, but still he stood steadfast and shouldered arms.

Then a door opened, the draught caught the dancing girl, and she fluttered like a sylph right into the stove to the tin soldier, flashed into a flame, and was gone. The tin soldier at the same time melted into a mere lump of metal, and when the serving-maid next day raked the ashes out of the grate she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. Of the dancing girl, all that remained was the spangle, and that was as black as a cinder.

The Emperor's New Clothes

Many years ago there lived an Emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money upon dress and finery. He cared not a straw for his soldiers, nor for going to the theatre or driving in the park; all he really cared about was showing his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as in other countries men speak of the "King in Council," so here men spoke of the "Emperor in Wardrobe."

The great city where he dwelt was a very pleasant place. Many strangers visited it every day, and one day two impostors arrived who gave themselves out for weavers, and pretended they knew how to weave the most beautiful cloth imaginable. Not only were the colors and patterns altogether out of the common, but the clothes made from such cloth had the peculiar property of being invisible to every man who was either unfit for his office or stupid.

"They would indeed be valuable clothes," thought the Emperor. "By wearing them, I could find out which of my ministers are unfit for the posts they occupy, and I could tell the wise from the stupid. Yes; some of that cloth must be woven for me at once." And he gave the two impostors

a lot of money in advance so that they might begin their work.

Accordingly they set up two looms and pretended they were working, but there was absolutely nothing upon the looms. Very soon they demanded the finest silk and the purest gold thread, which they put carefully away, and worked on with the empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how the manufacture of the cloth is getting on," thought the Emperor; but really and truly his heart a little misgave him when he remembered that the stupid or the incapable would not be able to see the cloth. He fancied, indeed, that he had no need to be anxious on his own account, but he thought it would be safer to send someone else first to see how things went. Every person throughout the city had heard of the wonderful properties of the new cloth, and all were eager to see how foolish or stupid their neighbors were.

"I will send my worthy old minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor; "he can best see what the cloth looks like, for he is a man of intellect, and none is fitter for his office than he."

So the able old minister went into the room where the two impostors sat working at the empty looms. "Mercy on us!" thought he, and opened his eyes very wide. "I can't see anything." But he took very good care not to say so.

The two impostors begged him to draw nearer, and asked him if the pattern was not a pretty one,

and the colors very beautiful. Then they pointed at the empty looms, and the poor old minister opened his eyes wider and wider, but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to see. "Good gracious!" thought he, "I am not stupid, surely? I never thought so before, and I'll take good care that nobody shall know it now. What! I am not fit for my office, eh? Oh, no, it will never do for me to go and say that I can't see the cloth!"

"Well, have you nothing to say about it?" asked one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is beautiful! absolutely the most lovely thing in the world!" said the old minister, and he took out his spectacles. "What a pattern! And those colors, too! Yes, I'll tell the Emperor that it pleases me immensely!"

"Well, we are pleased with it too," said the two weavers; and now they named the colors in detail, and described the pattern. The old minister carefully listened to all they said, so as to be able to repeat the same things to the Emperor, which he accordingly did.

And now the impostors demanded more money, more silk, and more gold; they required the gold for the weaving, they said. They stuck everything into their own pockets; not so much as a thread passed over the looms; but they continued as before to weave upon the empty looms.

In a short time the Emperor sent another very able official to see how the weaving was getting on, and if the cloth was nearly ready. It fared with

him as with the minister. He gazed and gazed, but as there was nothing there but the empty loom, he could not contrive to see anything.

"A pretty piece of cloth, isn't it?" said the two impostors, and pretended to point out the pretty patterns, of which there was really no trace.

"Surely I am not stupid!" thought the man. "Not fit for my post, eh! A pretty joke, I must say, but I must not let it be noticed!" So he praised the cloth he did not see, and congratulated them on the beautiful colors and the lovely patterns. "Yes, it is perfectly enchanting!" said he to the Emperor.

Soon all the people in the town were talking of the splendid cloth.

And now the Emperor had a mind to see the cloth himself while it was still on the loom. With a host of the great folk of his realm, among whom were the two able officials who had been there before, he went to the two crafty impostors, who were now working with all their might, but without a stitch or thread.

"Now, is it not magnificent?" said the two officials. "Will your Majesty deign to observe what patterns, what colors are here?" and they pointed at the empty looms, taking it for granted that the others could see the cloth.

"Why, what is this?" thought the Emperor. "I don't see anything! How horrible! Am I stupid then? Am I unfit to be Emperor? That would be the most frightful thing that could happen to me! Oh, it is very fine!" said he aloud. "It has my most

gracious approbation!" and he nodded his head approvingly, and gazed at the empty loom. He would not say that he could not see anything. His whole suite stared and stared; they could make no more of it than the rest, but they repeated after the Emperor, "Oh, it is very fine!" and advised him to wear clothes made of this new and gorgeous cloth for the first time on the occasion of the grand procession which was about to take place.

"It is magnificent, elegant, excellent!" went from mouth to mouth. Everybody seemed so mightily pleased with the cloth that the Emperor gave each of the impostors a ribbon and a cross to wear, and conferred on them the title of "Weavers to the Imperial Court."

On the eve of the procession the impostors sat up all night, and had more than sixteen candles lit. The people could see that they were busy getting ready the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom, they clipped the air with large scissors, and sewed with needles without thread, and at last declared, "There, the clothes are now quite ready!"

The Emperor, with his principal lords, then came himself, and the impostors raised their arms as if they were holding up something, and said, "Look, here are the hose, and here is the coat, and here the mantle. They are as light as gossamer," they continued, "you would fancy you had nothing on at all, but that is just the beauty of the cloth."

"Of course!" said all the gentlemen-in-waiting; but they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"And now, if your Imperial Majesty would most graciously deign to have your clothes taken off," said the impostors, "we will put on the new ones for your Majesty. In front of the large mirror, please! Thank you!"

So the Emperor's clothes were removed, and the impostors pretended to give him the newly-made ones piece by piece, and they smoothed down his body, and tied something fast which was supposed to be the train, and the Emperor turned and twisted himself in front of the mirror.

"What a wonderful suit it is! How nicely it fits!" the people cried with one voice. "What a pattern! What colors! It is a splendid dress!"

"The canopy which is to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting outside," the Master of the Ceremonies announced.

"All right," said the Emperor; "I am quite ready. Do my clothes fit well?" He turned himself once more before the mirror, to make believe that he was now taking a general survey of his splendor. The gentlemen-in-waiting, who had to bear his train, fumbled with their hands along the floor as if they were taking the train up, and as they went along they held their hands in the air, for they dared not let it be supposed that they saw nothing.

And thus the Emperor marched in the proces-

sion beneath the beautiful canopy, and every one in the streets and in the windows said, "Gracious! how perfect the Emperor's new clothes are! What a beautiful train! How splendidly everything fits!" No one would have it supposed that he saw nothing, for then he would certainly have been unfit for his post, or very stupid. None of the Emperor's clothes had been so successful as these.

"Why, he has got nothing on!" cried a little child.

"Listen to the voice of innocence!" said the father; for everyone was whispering to his neighbor what the child had said. "He has nothing on! There is a little child here who says he has nothing on!"

"He really has nothing on!" at length cried the whole crowd.

The Emperor shrank within himself as he heard, for it seemed to him that they were right, but he thought at the same time, "At any rate I must go through with this procession to the end." So he put on a still haughtier air, and the gentlemen-in-waiting marched behind, carefully holding up the train that wasn't there.

The Ugly Duckling

It was so pretty out in the country in the glorious summer-time.

The corn stood yellow, the oats green, the hay was stacked in the meadows, and the stork strode about on his long red legs and chattered Egyptian, for he had learnt that language from his mother. Round about the fields and meadows were great forests, and in the midst of the woods deep lakes; yes, it was truly delightful out in the country!

In the sunlight stood an old country house encircled by deep ditches. From the walls right down to the water grew large dock-leaves that had shot up so high that little children could stand on tiptoe beneath the tallest. It was as lonesome there as in the thickest wood, and here lay a duck upon her nest; she was engaged in hatching her young, but by this time she was nearly tired of the task, it had lasted so long and she seldom received visitors; the other ducks preferred to swim about in the ditches to waddling up the bank and sitting under a dock-leaf to gossip with her.

At last one egg cracked, and then another and another.

"Peep! peep!" was the cry; all the yokes of the

eggs had become alive and stuck out their heads.

"Quick! quick!" cried the mother duck; and so they all scampered around as fast as they could and looked about beneath the green leaves, and the mother let them look to their hearts' content, for green is good for the eyes.

"How big the world is, to be sure!" said the young ducklings, for now indeed they had more room to stir about in than when they lay within the egg-shell.

"Do you fancy that this is the whole world?" said their mother, "why, it stretches far beyond the other side of the garden right into the parson's field; but there I have never been. I suppose the whole lot of you are out, eh?" and she rose up. "No, I haven't got you all yet! The biggest egg lies there still. How much longer am I to wait? I am sick and tired of it!" And down she sat again.

"Well, how are things with you?" asked an old duck who came to pay her a visit.

"This last egg takes such a time!" answered the sitting duck, "no hole will come in it! But just look at the others! They are the prettiest ducklings I have ever seen! They are all just like their father, the wretch! He never comes to see me!"

"Let me see the egg that won't crack!" said the old duck. "Take my word for it, 'tis a turkey's egg. I was fooled that way myself once, and the youngsters were a grief and a trouble to me, I can tell you, for they were afraid of the water. I couldn't get them into it anyhow! I snapped and quacked, but it was of no use. Let me see the egg, I say! Yes,

it *is* a turkey's egg. Leave it alone and go and teach the other children to swim!"

"Nay, but I'll sit on it a bit longer all the same," said the duck; "I have sat so long already, I may as well sit a few hours longer."

"As you like!" said the old duck, and she waddled off.

At last the big egg cracked. "Peep, peep!" said the fledgling as it wriggled out—he was so big and ugly. The duck looked at him.

"What a frightfully big duckling it is!" cried she; "none of the others is a bit like him! Surely, it can never be a turkey chick! Well, we shall soon find out about that! Into the water he goes if I have to *kick* him in!"

Next day it was the most glorious weather; the sun shone on all the green dock-leaves. The mother duck with all her family came down to the ditch. "Quick! quick!" cried she, and one duckling plunged into the water after the other; the water closed over their heads, but up they came again at once and floated so prettily; their legs went of themselves. The whole lot of them were in; even the ugly gray fledgling swam along with them.

"No, it is no turkey!" said the mother duck, "see how nicely it uses its legs, how upright it holds itself! 'Tis my own youngster! Now, really, when you come to look closely, it's quite pretty! Quick! quick! Come with me now and I will lead you into the great world and present you to the duck-yard, but always keep close to me so that

no one may tread upon you; and beware of the cat!"

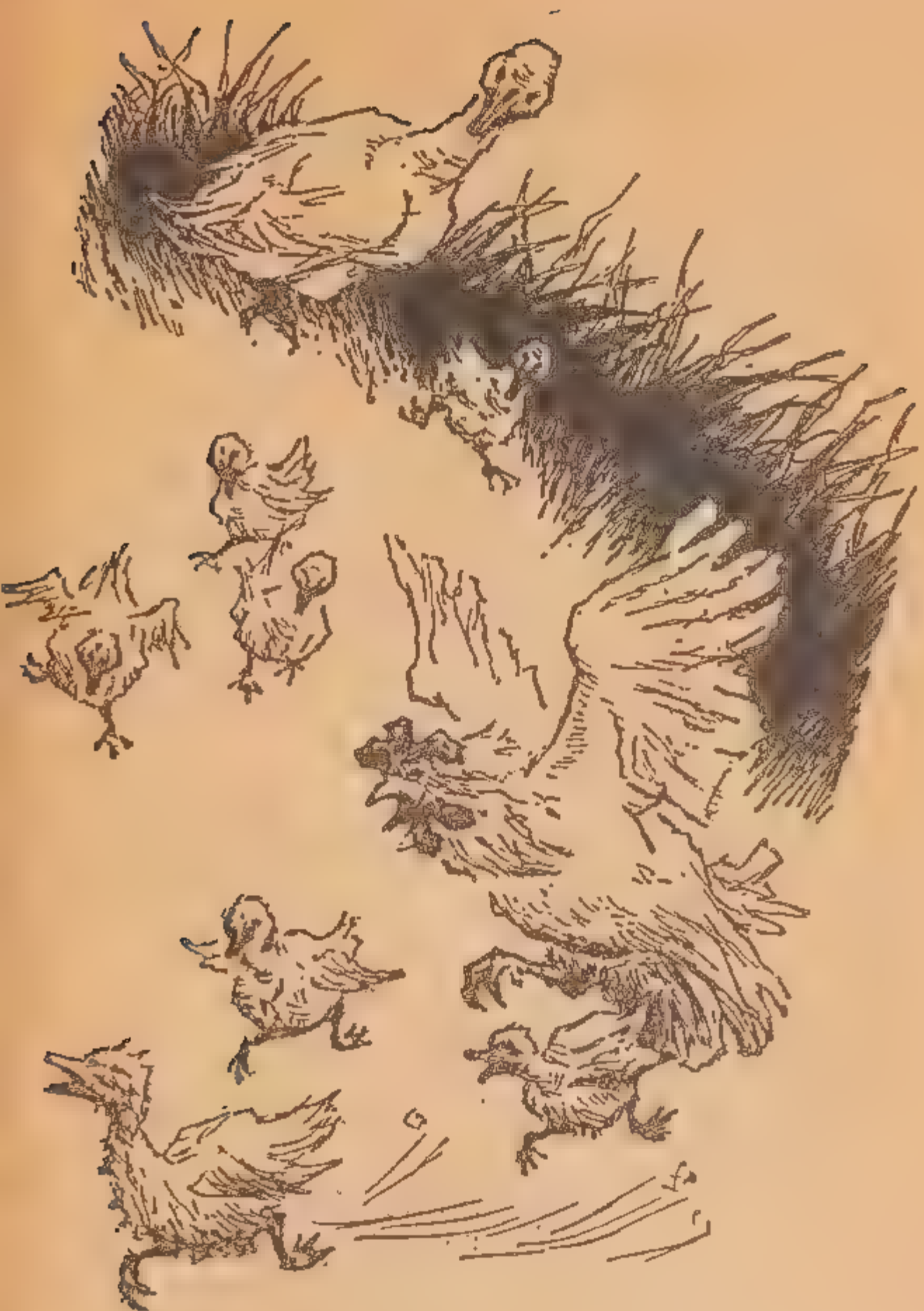
And so they came into the duck-yard. There was a frightful noise there, for two families were fighting over an eel's head, and the cat got it after all.

"Look, that is the way of the world!" said the duck-mother, and licked her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Use your legs," said she, "look smart and nod your necks at that old duck yonder, for she is the most distinguished person here; she is of Spanish descent; and don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg! That is the greatest distinction any duck can have; it is as much as to say they don't want to get rid of her, and men and beasts are to take note thereof. Quack! quack! Don't turn your feet in! A well-brought-up duckling keeps his feet wide apart like father and mother! Look!—So! —And now thrust out your neck and say 'Quack!' "

They did so; but all the other ducks round about looked at them and said quite loudly, "Just look! Now we shall have all that mob too! As if there were not enough of us here already! And oh, fie! what a fright *that* duckling looks! We won't put up with him, anyhow!" And immediately a duck flew at the big fledgling and bit him in the neck.

"Leave him alone, will you!" said the mother; "he's doing no harm."

"Yes, but he is too big and queer!" said the



duck who had bitten him, "and so he must be snubbed!"

"You have pretty children, mother!" said the old duck with the rag round her leg. "They are all pretty except one, which hasn't turned out well at all! I wish you could make him over again!"

"Impossible, your grace!" said the mother of the ducklings; "he is not pretty, but he has a good disposition and swims as nicely as any of the others; I may say even a bit better! I fancy he will grow prettier, or perhaps somewhat smaller, in time. He has lain too long in the egg and therefore he has not got the proper shape!"

Then she trimmed the ruffled feathers of his neck with her beak and smoothed down the rest of his person. "Besides, he is a drake," she said, "and so it doesn't so much matter! I think he'll be strong enough to fight his way along!"

"The other ducklings are very nice," said the old duck. "Pray make yourself quite at home, and if you find an eel's head you may bring it to me."

And so the family made themselves comfortable.

But the poor duckling who had come out of the egg last of all and looked so ugly, was bitten, pushed about, and made fun of both by the ducks and the hens. "He is too big!" they all cried; and the turkey cock, who had been born with spurs, and therefore thought himself an emperor at least, puffed himself out like a ship in full sail, pitched into him, and then gabbled till he was

red in the face. The poor duckling knew not where to turn, and was so distressed because he was ugly and the laughing-stock of the whole duck-yard.

Thus it fared with him the first day, and after that things grew worse and worse. The wretched duckling was pushed about by them all. His own brothers and sisters kept saying: "If only the cat would take you, you hideous object!" while even his own mother said, "Would that you were far, far away!" The ducks bit him, the hens pecked him, and the girl who gave the animals their food kicked him.

Then he ran away and flew right over the hedge; the little birds in the bushes were scared and flew into the air. "That is because I am so ugly," said the duckling and closed his eyes. So he ran on till he came to a large fen where the wild ducks dwelt, and there he lay the whole night, weary and sorrowful.

In the morning the wild ducks flew up into the air and saw their new comrade. "What kind of a thing are you?" they asked, and the duckling turned in every direction and greeted them as well as it could.

"You are intensely ugly!" said the wild ducks; "but it is all the same to us if only you do not marry into the family!"

Poor creature! As if he had any idea of marrying! It was enough for him if he might be allowed to lie among the rushes and drink a little fen water.

There he lay for two whole days, and then there came two wild geese, or rather wild ganders; it was not very long ago since they had come out of the egg-shells, and that was why they were so pert.

"Listen, comrade!" said they; "you are so ugly that we have quite taken a fancy to you. Will you scud about with us and become a bird of passage? Close by here, in another fen, are some sweet, delightful wild geese, maiden ladies the whole lot of them, who can say 'Quack!' most charmingly. You'll be able to cut a fine figure there, ugly as you are!"

"Pop! Pop!" sounded the same instant, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, while the water turned blood-red. "Pop! Pop!" sounded again, and whole swarms of wild geese flew up out of the rushes. Then there were fresh bangs. It was a shooting party; the sportsmen lay around about the fen, nay, some even sat up in the branches of the trees which stretched right over the rushes; the blue smoke went like clouds among the dark trees and hung far over the water, and the hunting dogs came splash-splashing through the mire. Reeds and sedges swayed in every direction; it was a terrible moment for the poor duckling, who turned its head round to put it beneath its wing, and the same instant a frightful big dog stood right in front of it, his tongue hanging far out of his mouth, his eyes shining fearfully; he put his jaws right against the duck-

ling, showed his sharp teeth—and splash! off he went again without seizing it.

"Oh, heaven be praised!" sighed the duckling. "I am so ugly that even the dog doesn't like to bite mē!"

And it lay quite still while the shots hissed among the sedges and gun after gun cracked and banged away.

Only when the day was far advanced and all was still again did the poor duckling dare to get up. It waited many hours longer before it looked about, and then hastened away from the fen as fast as it could. It ran over marsh and meadow, but there was such a wind that it could hardly get along.

Towards evening, it reached a broken-down little cottage. The poor creature was so wretched that it could not make up its mind as to which side it would fall, and so remained standing. It then perceived that the door was off one of its hinges and hung so loosely that it could peep into the room through the crack.

Here dwelt an old woman with her cat and her hen. The cat, whom she called Sonny, could shoot up his back and purr; he could even throw out sparks, but you had to stroke his fur the wrong way first. The hen had stumpy little legs and was therefore called Chicky-short-legs; it laid good eggs and the old woman loved it as if it had been her child.

Next morning they perceived the strange duck-

ling and the cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"Well I never!" said the old woman, and looked all about her. But her eyesight was not very good, so she fancied that the duckling was a fat duck which had lost its way. "Why, this is a rare good find!" said she; "now perhaps I can have ducks' eggs too. We must wait a bit and see."

So the duckling was taken on trial for three weeks, but not a single egg came to light. The cat was master in that house and the hen was mistress, and they always said: "We and the world!" for they thought that they were half of the world, and the better half too. The duckling hinted that there might be two opinions on this point, but the hen would not hear of such a thing.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

"Then hold your tongue!"

And the cat said, "Can you arch your back, purr and throw out sparks?"

"No!"

"Then you have no business to have any opinion at all when sensible people are talking."

So the duckling sat in a corner and was quite out of sorts. Then it thought of the fresh air and the sunshine, and was seized with such a strong desire to float upon the water that at last it could not help saying so to the hen.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" asked the hen. "This comes of being idle. You have nothing

to do, and that's why you have all these fancies. Lay eggs or purr, and they'll go away!"

"But it is so nice to float upon the water!" said the duckling; "so nice to take a dive and go right down to the bottom!"

"Oh, most delightful, I am sure!" said the hen. "You're mad, I think! Ask the cat; he's the wisest person I know. If he likes floating on the water or taking dives, I'll say no more. Ask our mistress, the old woman; there is no one in the whole world wiser than she. Do you fancy that *she* has any desire to float on the water and take dives?"

"You don't understand me!" said the duckling.

"If *we* don't understand you, I should like to know who does! You will never be wiser than the cat and the old woman, let alone myself! Don't make a fool of yourself, child, and thank Heaven for all the kindness that has been shown to you. Have you not been admitted into a warm room and into company from which you can learn something? But you're a wretch and association with you is anything but pleasant. You may take my word for it. I only mean it for your good when I tell you unpleasant truths. 'Tis only one's real friends who talk to one like that! See that you lay eggs and learn to purr or give out sparks."

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Do by all means!" said the hen.

So the duckling went. It floated upon the water,

and took dives, but all the other animals looked down upon it because it was so ugly.

And now autumn came. The leaves of the forest grew yellow and brown, the wind caught hold of them and made them dance about, and there was a cold look high in the sky. The clouds hung heavy with hail and snowflakes, and on the fence stood the raven and cried, for sheer cold, "Owl owl!" Yes, the very thought was enough to make one freeze. The poor duckling had anything but a nice time of it.

One evening the sun went down gloriously, and forth from a large grove came a whole flock of lovely large birds. The duckling had never seen anything so beautiful; they were dazzlingly white with long, supple, graceful necks: they were swans. They uttered a strange cry, spread out their splendid wings, and flew away from the cold fields to warmer lands and open lakes. They rose so high, so high, that the ugly little duckling felt quite queer. It turned round in the water like a wheel, stretched its neck after them high in the air, and uttered such a loud and odd shriek that it was frightened at its own voice. Oh! it could not forget the beautiful birds, the happy birds, and as soon as it had lost sight of them altogether, it ducked right down to the bottom, and when it came up again it was quite beside itself. It knew not the name of the birds, or whither they were flying, yet it loved them as it had never loved anything before. It envied them not one bit. How could it presume to wish

for such loveliness! It would have been only too glad if they had suffered it to go with them, the poor ugly creature.

And the winter grew so cold, so cold, the duckling had to keep swimming on the water to prevent it from freezing altogether. But every night the hole in which it swam became smaller and smaller; it froze so that the whole crust of ice crackled again and the duckling had to use its legs continually so that the water might not close up. At last the poor duckling grew faint, lay quite still, and froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a farmer came that way, saw the duckling, went out to it, broke the ice with his wooden shoe, and brought the bird home to his wife, and there it revived.

The children wanted to play with it, but the duckling fancied they meant to hurt it, and in its fright flew right into the milkcan, so that the milk was splashed all about the room. The woman shrieked and smote her hands; then it flew into the butter tub, and then down into the meal barrel and out again, by which time it cut a pretty figure, you may be sure. The woman shrieked and flung the fire-irons at it; the children tumbled over each other's legs in trying to seize it, and laughed and shrieked again. Luckily the door was open, and out it rushed into the freshly fallen snow among the bushes, and there lay as if in a swoon.

But it would really be too heartrending to tell of all the distress and wretchedness the poor duck-

ling had to put up with that hard winter. It was lying in the marsh among the rushes when the sun again began to shine warmly; the larks were singing, it was beautiful spring-time.

One day it extended its wings; they had a stronger beat than before and bore it easily away; and ere it rightly knew where it was, the duckling found itself in a large garden where apple trees stood in full bloom, where the lilac flowers gave forth their perfume and hung on the long green branches right down towards the winding ditches. Oh, it was lovely here, so full of the freshness of spring; and right in front, from out of the thicket, came three beautiful white swans; they made a rushing sound with their wings and floated upon the water. The duckling recognized the splendid creatures and was overcome by a strange feeling of sorrow.

"I will fly towards the royal birds! They will peck me to death because I, who am so ugly, dare to approach them; but it is all one to me. Better to be slain by them than to be nipped by the ducks, pecked by the hens, kicked by the girl who looks after the poultry, and to suffer want in the winter-time!"

So it flew out into the water, and swam towards the stately swans, who saw it and came darting towards it with bristling plumes. "Kill me and have done with me!" cried the poor creature, and bowed its head towards the water and awaited death. But what did it see in the clear water? Its

own image! It was no longer a clumsy, dark gray bird, ugly and clammy, but was itself a swan!

It doesn't matter a bit about being born in a duck-yard when one has lain in a swan's egg.

The large swans now swam round and round about it and stroked it with their beaks and were quite friendly.

Some little children came running into the garden; they threw corn and breadcrumbs on the water, and the smallest of them exclaimed: "There's a new one!" The other children also shouted, "Yes! a new one has come!" And they clapped their hands and danced about and ran to fetch their father and mother, and bread and cakes were flung into the water, and they all said: "The new one is the prettiest! It is so young and lovely!" And the old swans bowed before it.

It felt so bashful that it stuck its head beneath its wings, it did not know what to do. It was almost too happy but not a bit proud, for a good heart is never proud. It thought of how it had been persecuted and despised, and now all said that it was the loveliest of lovely birds. And the lilacs bowed their branches down into the water towards it, and the sun shone so nice and warm, and then the swan swelled out its plumage, raised its slim neck, and cried from the bottom of its heart: "I never dreamed of such bliss when I was an ugly duckling!"

The Flying Trunk

There was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street, and a little alley besides, with silver pieces, but he didn't, for he had other things to do with his money. He made a quarter out of every penny he invested (that's the sort of merchant *he* was!), and then he died.

His son now got all this money and he lived right merrily, went to fancy balls every night, made kites out of bonds and banknotes, and played at ducks and drakes over the water with gold pieces instead of stones, so that his money had leave to go, and go it did, till at last he had nothing in the world but four pennies, a pair of slippers, and an old dressing-gown. Now that he was not fit to be seen in the street with them, his friends washed their hands of him altogether; but one of them, who was better natured, sent him an old trunk, with the message "Pack up!" which was certainly very good advice, but as he had nothing at all to pack up he sat on the trunk instead.

It was a very wonderful trunk. You had only to press the lock and the trunk set off flying. It did so now. Whisk! up the chimney it flew with

him, high above the clouds, farther and farther and farther still; it creaked frightfully and the young man was terrified lest it should go to pieces altogether, in which case he would have turned quite a pretty somersault. But at last he got to the land of the Turks. He hid the trunk in a wood beneath some dried leaves and then went into the town; there was nothing to prevent him from doing that, for among the Turks everybody went about like himself, in dressing-gowns and slippers.

He happened to meet a nurse with a little child. "Listen, thou Turkish nurse!" said he, "what is that large castle close to the town with the windows all so high?"

"That is where the King's daughter dwells!" said she; "it has been foretold that she will have great trouble about a lover, and so no wooer is allowed to approach her unless the King and Queen come too."

"Thank you!" said the merchant's son; and he went back to the wood, sat on the trunk, flew on to the roof of the castle, and crept through the Princess's window.

She lay upon a sofa asleep, and was so pretty that the merchant's son could not help kissing her. She awoke and was quite frightened, but he said he was the god of the Turks who had come through the air to her, and that seemed to please her. So they sat side by side and he told her tales about her eyes: he said they were like beautiful dark lakes and that thoughts swam in them like

so many little mermaids; and he made up tales about her forehead, which he said was like a snow mountain with the loveliest rooms and pictures; and he told her about the stork that brings the sweet little children. Yes, indeed, very pretty tales they were, so he wooed the Princess and she said "Yes," immediately.

"But," she added, "you must come on Saturday when the King and Queen are here to tea; they will be very proud for me to have a Turkish god for my husband. But see that you have a really lovely tale ready, for that is what my parents are particularly fond of; my mother likes *her* stories moral and refined, while my father likes them rollicking—things that make one laugh, you know!"

"Very well, the only bridal gift I shall bring will be a nice tale!" said he, and so they parted. But the Princess gave him a sabre set with gold pieces; it was just what he wanted and he could turn it to good account.

So he flew away, bought himself a new dressing-gown, and then sat down in the wood and began composing a tale; it was to be ready by Saturday, and it is not so easy to compose that sort of thing to order.

But he was ready with it at last, and by that time it was Saturday. The King and Queen and the whole Court were having tea with the Princess, and they were all awaiting him. He was received so nicely!

"And now will you tell us a tale?" said the

Queen, "one that is profound and improving!"

"But which will make one laugh as well!" said the King.

"Oh, certainly!" said he; and so he told them what you must now listen to very attentively.

"There was once a bundle of matches which were very proud of their descent; their ancestral tree—that is to say, the great fir-tree of which each one of them was a little splinter—had been a huge old tree in the forest. The matches now lay upon the shelf between a tinder box and an old iron pot, and to these they told the tale of their youth.

" 'Yes, when we were on the green branch,' said they, 'then we were indeed happy! Every morning and evening diamond tea, that is to say, dew. Sunshine all day in summer, and all the little birds to tell us stories. We could see very well that we, too, were rich, for the leaf trees[1] were only dressed up in summer, but our family had the right to wear clothes both summer and winter. But then came the wood-cutters; that was the great revolution, and our family was felled to the ground. The head of the family got a place as main-mast on board a splendid ship, which could sail round the world if it liked; the other branches went elsewhere, and our mission now is to light candles for the common people—that is why we distinguished people have come down to the kitchen.'

" 'Well, things are very different with me!'

[1] All trees except the pine and fir species.

said the iron pot, by the side of which lay the matches, 'ever since I came out in the world I have been scoured and boiled many and many a time. I look to solidity, and, properly speaking, am the first person in the house. My only joy is to lie neat and clean after dinner on the shelf and to have a sensible chat with my comrades; but if I except the pail, which occasionally goes down into the garden, we always live indoors. Our only newsmonger is the market-basket, and it is always talking about the Government and the people. Last year there was an old pot with us who was so terrified by this talk that it fell down and dashed itself to pieces. That market-basket is quite a Radical, I can tell you!'

"'You chatter too much, you do!' said the tinder box, and the steel struck the flint till it sparkled. 'Shall we have a cheerful afternoon now?'

"'Yes, let us talk about who is the most nobly born,' said the matches.

"'No, I don't like talking about myself,' said the pot. 'Let us have an entertainment. I'll begin. I'll tell about something which everyone has experienced; one can imagine one's self in similar circumstances, and that is such great fun. "By the Baltic Sea, where the Danish beeches grow——"'

"'That is a nice beginning,' said the plates, 'we know we shall like that story.'

"'Yes, there I passed the days of my youth in a quiet family; the furniture was waxed, the floor washed, and we had clean curtains every fortnight.'

" 'How interesting you make your story!' said the hearth-broom. 'One can hear at once that it is a lady who tells the tale; a vein of such refinement runs through it all.'

" 'Yes, one does feel that!' said the pail, and it took a little skip for pure joy, so that the floor creaked.

"So the pot continued its story, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"The plates rattled for joy, and the hearth-brush took some green parsley and crowned the pot, for it knew that that would vex the others. 'And if I crown her today,' it thought, 'She will crown me tomorrow.'

" 'Now I will dance,' said the fire-tongs, and dance it did. How it flung its legs into the air! the old chair-cover in the corner split its sides at the sight.

" 'Let me be crowned too!' said the fire-tongs, and crowned she was.

" 'A low lot, a low lot after all!' thought the matches.

"And now the teapot was asked to sing, but she protested that she had a cold and could only sing when she was boiling over, but this was pure pretense: she would not sing unless she was on the table with the family.

"Right in the window-sill stood an old quill pen which the maid-servant used to write with; there was nothing remarkable about it except that it had been dipped a little too deeply into the inkpot, but of that it was proud. 'If the tea-

pot won't sing,' it said, 'she may leave it alone. Outside there is a nightingale hanging in a cage; it can sing if you like. It is true it hasn't *learned* anything, but we won't speak ill of it this evening.'

"'I consider it very unbecoming that such a foreign bird should be listened to at all,' said the tea-kettle, who was the kitchen songstress and half-sister of the teapot. 'Is it patriotic? That's what I want to know! Let the market-basket decide.'

"'All I know is that I am very angry!' said the market-basket; 'nobody can imagine how angry I am! Is this a proper way of passing the evening, I ask? Would it not be much better to put the house to rights first? Everyone would then get his proper place, and I should rule the whole roost. Things would be very different then!'

"'Yes, let us kick up a row!' said they all. The same instant the door opened. It was the maid-servant, and they immediately stood stockstill; no one uttered a sound. But there was not a pot there which did not know very well what it could do and how distinguished it really was. 'Yes, if only I had liked,' thought each one of them, 'what a jolly afternoon we should have had!'

"The maid-servant took the matches and struck a light with them; how they spluttered and burst into flame, to be sure! 'Now every one can see,' thought they, 'that we stand first of all! What light, what splendor is ours!' and so they burned right out."

"That was a beautiful story!" said the Queen. "I so entered into the feelings of the matches in the kitchen. Yes, now you shall have our daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said the King, "you shall have our daughter on Monday!" And they spoke to him in such a friendly way that he felt he was already one of the family.

So the wedding-day was fixed. The evening before the whole city was illuminated; buns and cakes were scattered broadcast, and the street-boys stood on their heads, whistled through their fingers, and cried "Hurrah!" It was truly magnificent.

"Yes; I must take good care to do something likewise!" thought the merchant's son. So he bought rockets, crackers, and every sort of fire-work you can think of, put them in his trunk and then flew up into the air. How they went off and how they fizzed! The Turks all skipped into the air at the sight, so that their slippers flew about their ears; such a shower of meteors they had never seen before. Now they could well understand that it was the god of the Turks himself who was to marry the Princess.

As soon as the merchant's son came down again into the wood with his trunk he thought: "I will just go into the town to learn how the affair went off!" And it was only natural that he should wish to do so.

Every one whom he asked about it had seen

the affair in his own way, but one and all thought it charming.

"I saw the god of the Turks himself," said one, "he had eyes like shining stars and a beard like foaming water."

"He flew in a fiery mantle," said another; "the loveliest little angels peeped forth from the folds of it."

Yes, he heard the most beautiful things about himself, and the day after he was to be married.

And now he went back to the wood to sit on his trunk—but where was it? The trunk was burnt! A spark from the fireworks had remained within, the trunk had caught fire, and was now nothing but ashes. He could fly no more, nor go to meet his bride.

She stood all day on the roof and waited; and most likely she is still waiting; but he goes round about the world and tells stories, but they are no longer as merry as the story he told about the matches.

Thumbelina

There was once a woman who wanted very much to have a wee little child, but had no idea whatever where she should find one. So she went to an old witch and said to her—

"I do so long to have a little child; will you tell me where I can get one?"

"We'll soon get over that difficulty!" said the witch. "Here is a barley-corn; it is not at all the sort which grows in the farmer's fields, or that fowls are given to eat. Put it in a flowerpot and you'll see something, I promise you."

"Thank you," said the woman, and she gave the witch twelve silver pennies, went home, and planted the barley-corn. Immediately a beautiful flower grew up which looked just like a tulip, but the leaves were all folded tightly together as if it were still budding.

"That's a pretty flower!" said the woman; and she kissed the lovely red and yellow petals. At that very moment the flower gave a loud crack and opened. It was a real tulip, anyone could see that, but right in the middle of the flower sat a wee little girl, so nice and fine. She was only a thumb long, so they called her Thumbelina.

She was given a splendidly polished walnut-

shell for her cradle, she lay upon blue violet-leaves, and had a roseleaf for her counterpane. There she slept at night, but in the day-time she played on the table, where the woman put a plate surrounded with a wreath of flowers with their stalks in the water; here a large tulip leaf floated, and on this leaf Thumbelina used to sail from one end of the plate to the other; she had two white horse-hairs to row with. It was such a pretty sight! She could sing too, nicely and softly; never had the like been heard before.

One night, as she lay in her pretty cradle, an ugly old toad came hopping through a broken pane in the window. The toad was big and wet, and it hopped right on to the table where Thumbelina lay sleeping beneath the red roseleaf.

"She would make a very nice wife for my son," said the toad; and with that she took up the walnut-shell in which Thumbelina lay and hopped away through the broken pane out into the garden. A large broad river ran there, but close by the bank it was all swampy and muddy, and there the toad and her son lived together. Ugh! he, too, was nasty and ugly, like his mother.

"Koax-koax-brekke-ke-kex!" that was all he could say when he saw the pretty little girl in the walnut-shell.

"Don't chatter so loudly or you'll wake her!" said the old toad; "she could sneak away even now, for she is as light as swan's down. We'll put her out in the river, on one of the broad water-lily leaves; she is so light and little that it will be

quite an island to her. She can't escape from there while we are getting the stateroom under the mud ready, where you are to live and keep house."

Out in the river grew many clumps of water-lilies with broad, green leaves, that looked as if they were floating on the surface of the water; the leaf which was farthest out was also the largest; the old toad swam to it, and placed Thumbelina, nut-shell and all, on top of it.

The poor little creature awoke quite early in the morning, and when she saw where she was, she began to cry bitterly, for there was water on every side of the big green leaf, and she could not get ashore in any way. The old toad was busy down in the mud, decking her room with rushes and yellow sedges, for she was determined that her new daughter-in-law should find it nice and tidy. After that she swam out with her ugly son to the leaf where Thumbelina sat; they wanted to fetch away her pretty bed, as it was to be put into the bridal-chamber before the bride herself arrived.

The old toad bowed low in the water and said, "Let me introduce my son; he is to be your husband, and you will live together pleasantly down in the mud."

"Koax-koax-brekke-ke-kex!" was all the son could say for himself.

So they took the pretty little cradle and swam away with it; but Thumbelina sat alone on the green leaf and cried, for she did not want to live

in the nasty toad's house, nor to have her ugly son for a husband. Now, the little fishes who were swimming in the water had seen the toad and heard what she said, and they stuck their heads up to see the little girl. And directly they caught sight of her they thought her so pretty that they were quite angry at the idea of her going to live with the ugly toad. No, that should never be. So they swam around the green stem of the lily-leaf below the water and gnawed it quite through. So the leaf floated away down the river with Thumbelina—far, far away, where the toad could not come.

Thumbelina sailed past a lot of places and the little birds in the bushes looked at her and sang, "What a sweet little girl!" On floated the leaf, farther and farther away; and thus little Thumbelina went abroad on her travels.

A pretty little white butterfly hovered over her, and at last it settled on the leaf, for it had taken quite a fancy to Thumbelina. She was happy, for now the toad could not get at her, and as she sailed along the sun shone on the water like glistening gold and everything was very pretty. She took off her girdle and tied one end of it round the butterfly, and the other end she fastened to the leaf; so now it glided along more quickly than ever.

Presently a big cockchafer came flying along; he caught sight of her and instantly put his claw round her dainty waist and flew up into a tree with her. But the green leaf went sailing down

the river and the butterfly with it, for he was fastened to the leaf and could not get away.

Gracious! how frightened to be sure, was poor little Thumbelina when the cockchafer flew up into the tree with her. But she was anxious most of all about the poor white butterfly which she had tied fast to the leaf; if he could not get loose, he must surely starve to death! But the cockchafer did not trouble himself about that at all. He sat down with her on the largest green leaf in the tree, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and told her that she was very pretty, although she did not resemble a cockchafer in the least.

After that the other cockchafers who lived in the tree came and paid them a visit; they looked at Thumbelina, and shrugged their feelers and said, "Why, she has only two legs; what a fright she looks!" "She has no feelers at all," they went on, "just look how slender her waist is! Fie! she looks just like a human being! How ugly she is!"

All the lady cockchafers said this, and yet Thumbelina was pretty after all. The cockchafer who had run off with her thought so too, but as all the others said she was ugly, he got at last to believe she really was so, and would have nothing more to do with her; she might go where she liked, he said.

They flew down from the tree with her and placed her on a daisy; there she sat and cried because she was so ugly that even the cockchafers

would have nothing to do with her. And yet she was the loveliest little thing you can imagine, as fine and delicate as the most beautiful roseleaf.

All through the summer poor Thumbelina lived alone in the forest. She plaited herself a bed of grass-stalks and hung it up under a large dock-leaf so that the rain could not fall upon her; she gathered honey from the flowers for her food, and drank the dew which lay fresh every morning on the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed away; but now winter had come, the long, cold winter. All the birds that had sung so prettily flew away, the flowers withered, the trees shed their leaves, the large dock-leaf she had lived under shriveled up and became a yellow, withered stalk, and she felt horribly cold, for her clothes were in rags and she herself was so small and delicate that she was bound to freeze to death. Poor little Thumbelina! And now it began to snow, and every snowflake which fell upon her was just as if one were to cast a whole spadeful of snow upon one of us, for we are big and she was but a thumb long. She wrapped herself up in a withered leaf, but it did not warm her at all and she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood was a large corn-field, but the corn had long since been cut and carried away; only the bare, dry stubble stood up on the frozen ground. To her indeed it was just like another great wood; oh, how she shivered as she went through it! And thus she came to the field-mouse's door. It was a little hole right under the

stubble. There dwelt the field-mouse, quite warm and cosy; she had a whole room full of corn, and a nice kitchen and larder. Poor Thumbelina stood outside the door, like a beggar-girl, and begged for a little barley-corn, for she had not had anything to eat for two days.

"You poor little creature!" said the field-mouse, for, at bottom, it was a kind-hearted field-mouse; "come into my warm room and dine with me!"

Afterwards, as she thought well of Thumbelina, she said, "You are quite welcome to stay with me all the winter, but you must keep my room nice and clean and tell me stories, for I am very fond of stories."

Thumbelina did all the good old mouse required of her, and had a very nice time of it.

"We shall soon be having a visitor," said the field-mouse one day; "my neighbor always visits me once a week. He is better housed even than I am, for he has vast halls and goes about in a beautiful black fur coat; if only you could have him for a husband, you would be well provided for, but unfortunately he cannot see. Now mind, tell him the very prettiest stories you know."

But Thumbelina did not trouble her head about it at all, for she knew who the neighbor was —he was only a mole. So he came and paid them a visit in his rich black fur coat; he was very rich and learned, said the field-mouse, his house moreover was ten times as large as hers; but he absolutely could not endure the sun and the

pretty flowers; having never seen them, he spoke slightingly of them.

Thumbelina had to sing to him, and she sang "Fly away, Cockchafer!" and "The Blackcap trips the meadow along." The mole fell in love with her because of her sweet voice, but he said nothing at the time, for he was a very discreet person.

He had recently dug himself a long passage under the earth from his own house to theirs, and he gave the field-mouse and Thumbelina permission to walk in it whenever they liked. At the same time he told them not to be frightened at the dead bird which lay in the passage; it was a whole bird with feathers and beak complete, which certainly must have died quite recently, when the winter began, and had been buried just where he was making his passage.

The mole took a piece of touchwood in his mouth, for it shines like fire in the dark, and went in front to light them through the long, dark passage. When they came to the dead bird, the mole put his broad nose through the earth above till there was a large hole. Through this the light shone on the body of a dead swallow, with its pretty wings folded down to its sides, and its head and legs drawn in beneath its feathers; the poor bird had certainly died of cold.

Thumbelina was very sorry for it, she was fond of all little birds; had they not sung and twittered for her so prettily all through the summer? But the mole gave a kick at it with his short legs and said, "It will chirp no more now. How miserable

it must be to be born a little bird! Thank Heaven, none of my children will be *that!* Birds like that have nothing in the world but their 'Kwee-wit! Kwee-wit!' and must starve to death in the winter, stupid things!"

"You may well say that, sensible creature as you are," remarked the field-mouse. "What has a bird to show for itself when the winter comes, for all its 'Kwee-witting'? It must starve and freeze to death! very romantic, I daresay!"

Thumbelina said nothing, but when the other two had turned their backs on the dead bird, she bent down over it, brushed aside the feathers which lay over its head, and kissed its closed eyes. "Perhaps it was this very one which sang so prettily to me in the summer," she thought; "what joy it gave me, the lovely, darling bird!"

The mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight shone and escorted the ladies home. But at night Thumbelina could not sleep, so she rose from her bed, plaited a large and pretty rug of hay, and took it down with her and spread it round the dead bird, laying some soft wool, which she had found in the field-mouse's room, at the sides of the bird, that it might lie warm on the cold earth.

"Farewell, you pretty little bird!" said she, "farewell, and thank you for your pretty songs in the summer-time, when all the trees were green and the sun shone so warmly upon us!"

Then she laid her head on the bird's breast, but was very much startled, for it was just as if

something inside was going "Thump! thump!" It was the bird's heart. The bird was not really dead, it had been in a swoon, and when the warmth stole over it life began to return. In the autumn the swallows fly away to warmer lands, but if there be one that is late and gets left behind, it gets so cold that it falls down as it dead, and the cold snow comes and buries it.

Thumbelina trembled, so frightened was she, for really the bird was a big creature, compared with herself; but she plucked up her courage, wrapped the cotton-wool more closely round the poor swallow, and brought a leaf, which had served her as a counterpane, and placed it over the bird's head.

The following night she again crept down to it, and there it was quite alive, but so weak that it could only open its eye for a second and look at Thumbelina, who stood there with a little piece of touchwood in her hand, for she had no other light.

"Many thanks, you pretty little child!" said the sick swallow. "I am so nice and warm now. I shall soon get back my strength, and be able to fly away into the warm sunshine."

"Oh, not yet!" said she, "it is so cold outside, it is snowing and freezing! Keep in your warm bed, and I will nurse you!" She brought the swallow water in a leaf, and when it had drunk it told her how it had torn one of its wings on a thorn bush, and therefore could not fly so strongly as the other swallows, when they flew away to the

warm lands. Then it had fallen to the ground, but it could not remember anything more, and did not know in the least how it had got there.

The swallow stayed the whole winter, and Thumbelina was kind to it and loved it very much. Neither the mole nor the field-mouse was told a word about it, for Thumbelina knew they did not like birds.

As soon as the spring came and the sun had warmed the earth, the swallow said good-bye to Thumbelina, who opened the hole which the mole had made in the ground. The sun then shone in gloriously, and the swallow asked if she would not go with him; she could sit on his back and they would fly far out into the green wood. But Thumbelina knew that it would grieve the old field-mouse if she left her like that.

"No, I cannot come," said Thumbelina.

"Good-bye, good-bye! you good, pretty little girl!" said the swallow, and flew out into the warm sunshine. Thumbelina looked after it, and the tears came to her eyes, for she dearly loved the swallow.

"Kwee-wit! Kwee-wit!" sang the bird, and flew away into the green wood. Thumbelina was very sorrowful. She could not get leave anyhow to go into the warm sunshine; the corn which had been sown in the field over the field-mouse's house had grown high in the air, and seemed like a thick wood to the poor little girl who was only a thumb long.

"This summer you must sew away at your *trous-*

seau," said the field-mouse, for by this time their neighbor, the tiresome mole, had made up his mind that he wanted her to be his wife. "You must have both linen and woolen in your wardrobe, for when you become the mole's bride you must sit down in the best and lie down in the best also."

So Thumbelina had to spin away at her distaff, and the field-mouse hired four spiders to weave for her night and day. Every evening the mole paid them a visit, and he always talked about the same thing, and said that when the summer came to an end the sun would not be so hot; as it was it baked the earth as hard as a stone. Yes, and when the summer was over the wedding with Thumbelina was to take place; but she did not like that at all, for she could not bear the tiresome mole.

Every morning when the sun arose, and every evening when it set, she crept out of doors, and when the wind parted the tops of the corn, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful it was in the light, and longed to see the dear swallow once more. But it never came back; it must certainly have flown far away into the greenwood.

When autumn came Thumbelina's outfit was quite ready.

"In four weeks you shall be wedded," said the field-mouse. But Thumbelina began to cry, and said that she could not marry the tiresome mole.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the field-mouse; "don't be obstinate, or I shall bite you with my white

teeth. Such a handsome husband as you're going to have too! what more do you want? The Queen herself has not the like of his black fur coat. He has lots too in both kitchen and cellar. Be thankful for such a husband, say I!"

And so they were to be married. The mole had already come to fetch Thumbelina away; she was to live with him deep down in the ground, and never come up into the warm sunlight at all, for he could not bear it. The poor child was so distressed, but she obtained leave to bid the beautiful sun farewell, for while she had lived with the field-mouse she had always been allowed to look at the sun from the door anyhow.

"Farewell, dear, golden sun!" she said, and stretched her arms high in the air, even going a little way beyond the field-mouse's door, for the corn had been reaped, and only dry stubble stood there now. "Farewell, farewell!" cried she, and threw her tiny arms round a little scarlet flower which grew there. "Greet the dear swallow from me if you ever see him!"

"Kwee-wit! Kwee-wit!" sounded at that very moment high above her head. She looked up. It was the swallow just passing by. As soon as he saw Thumbelina he was delighted. She told him how she disliked the idea of having the nasty mole for a husband, and having to live with him deep down under ground where the sun never shone. She could not keep back her tears as she told him.

"The cold winter is coming now," said the swallow; "I am going to fly far away to the warm lands.

Will you come with me? You can sit upon my back. You have only to tie yourself fast on with your girdle, and then we will fly right away from the ugly mole and his dark room, right over the mountains to the warm lands where the sun shines lovelier than here, and where there is always summer. Do, pray, fly away with me, you sweet little Thumbelina, who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark earthy cellar!"

"Yes, I'll go with you," said Thumbelina gladly. She sat on the bird's back, her feet resting on its outspread wings, tied her belt fast to one of its strongest feathers, and then the swallow flew high into the air, over wood and over sea, and high up over the big mountains where snow always lies. Thumbelina was almost frozen in the cold air, but she crept right in under the bird's warm feathers, only peeping out now and then to see all the beautiful things beneath her.

At last they came to the warm lands. There the sun shone much more brightly, the sky was twice as high, and in hedge and field grew the loveliest green and blue grapes. In the woods hung lemons and oranges, there was a fragrance of balsam and myrtle, and along the roads ran lovely children playing with large speckled butterflies. But the swallow flew still farther, and everything became lovelier and grander. Beneath stately green trees near a blue lake stood a dazzlingly white marble palace from the olden times. Vine tendrils twined up and around the high pillars, and up at the very top were a number of swallow-nests; in one of

those dwelt the swallow who had carried Thumbelina.

"Here is my house," said the swallow, "but pray choose one of the most splendid of the flowers that grow, and I'll put you there and you shall have as happy a time as you can desire."

"Oh, that will be lovely!" cried she, clapping her tiny hands.

On the ground lay a large white marble column which had fallen and broken into three pieces, and between them grew the loveliest white flowers. The swallow flew down with Thumbelina and placed her on one of the broad leaves; but how amazed was she when she saw a little elf sitting in the very center of the flower, as white and transparent as if he were of glass! He had on his head a tiny gold crown and bright wings on his shoulders, and he was scarcely any bigger than Thumbelina. He was the elf of the flower. In every flower there lived some such little man or woman, but he was the King of all.

"How handsome he is!" whispered Thumbelina to the swallow.

The little prince was quite frightened at the swallow, for to him it was a gigantic bird, but when he saw Thumbelina he was delighted; she was the very prettiest girl he had ever seen. He took his gold crown from his head and put it on hers, asking her name and begging her to be his wife, for then she would be the Queen of the flowers!

Now, this was something like a husband, and

very different from the son of a toad, or a mole in his black fur coat. So she said "Yes" to the pretty prince, and from every flower came forth a lord or a lady elf, all so graceful that it was a joy to behold them. At the wedding everyone brought Thumbelina a present, but the best of all was a pair of pretty wings from a large white fly; they were fastened on to Thumbelina's back, so that she could fly from flower to flower. There was a great merry-making, and the swallow sat overhead in his nest and sang to them as well as he could, but at heart he was distressed, for he loved Thumbelina and would have liked to be with her always.

"Farewell, farewell!" sang the swallow, a little later, and flew away again from the warm land—far, far away back to Denmark. There it has a little nest over the window of the man who tells fairy tales, and it sang to him, "Kwee-wit! Kwee-wit!" And that is how we got this story.

The Little Mermaid

Far out at sea the water is as blue as the loveliest cornflower and as clear as the purest crystal. But it is very deep—deeper than anchor ever yet reached; many church towers would have to be piled one upon the other to reach right up from the bottom to the surface. Down there dwell the Sea-folk.

Now you must by no means fancy that there is nothing there but a bare white sandbank. No, indeed! The most wondrous trees and plants grow there, the stalks and leaves of which are so supple that they wave to and fro at the least motion of the water, just as if they were living beings. All the fishes, small and great, glide among the branches just as the birds fly about the trees up here. In the deepest spot of all lies the Sea-King's palace. The walls are of coral and the tall, pointed windows of the clearest amber, while the roof is of mussel-shells, which open and shut according to the tide: and lovely they look, for in every one of the shells lies a glistening pearl, any of which would be the glory of a Queen's crown.

The Sea-King had been a widower for many years, so his aged mother kept house for him. She was a wise woman and very proud of her noble

birth, by reason of which she always went about with twelve oysters on her tail, the other important folk being only allowed to wear six. Nevertheless she was very well-esteemed, especially because of the loving care she took of the little sea-princesses, her granddaughters. They were six pretty children, but the youngest was the loveliest of them all. Her skin was as delicately tinted as a rose-leaf, and her eyes were as blue as the deepest sea, but, like all the others, she had no feet, her body ending in a fish's tail.

All day they used to play in the great rooms of the palace, where living flowers grew upon the walls. When the large amber windows were opened the fishes would swim into them just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows; only the fishes swam right up to the little princesses, ate out of their hands, and let themselves be patted.

Around the palace was a large garden full of bright red and dark blue trees; the fruit shone like gold, and the flowers like burning fire, as the stalks and leaves moved to and fro. The soil itself was the finest sand, but blue as sulphur-flames. A wondrous blue tint lay over everything; one would be more inclined to fancy that one was high up in the air and saw nothing but sky above and below than that one was at the bottom of the sea. During a calm, too, one could catch a glimpse of the sun; it looked like a crimson flower from the cup of which light streamed forth.

Each of the little princesses had her own gar-

den-plot where she could dig and plant as she pleased. One gave her flower-plot the form of a whale; another preferred hers to look like a little mermaid; but the youngest planted hers in a circle to imitate the sun and would only have flowers which shone red like it. She was an unusual child, silent and thoughtful, and while her sisters delighted to adorn their gardens with all the strangest things they could get from wrecked vessels, all that she would have, besides the rosy-red flowers which resembled the sun, was a pretty statue of a handsome boy, hewn out of pure white marble, which had sunk to the bottom of the sea during a shipwreck. She planted by this statue a rosy-red weeping willow; it grew splendidly and its fresh branches hung over the statue, nearly down to the sandy bottom where the shadows took a violet hue and moved to and fro like the branches. It seemed as if the top of the tree were at play with its roots, each trying to snatch kisses.

Her greatest joy was to hear about the world of mankind above. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew about ships and towns, people and animals. What struck her as specially wonderful was that the flowers which grew upon the earth should give forth fragrance, which they did *not* do at the bottom of the sea; and that the woods were green and that the fishes among the branches could sing so loudly and beautifully that it was a joy to listen to them. It was the little birds that her grandmother called

fishes; her listeners would not otherwise have understood her, for they had never seen birds.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea and sit in the moonshine on the rocks and see the big ships sail by; woods and cities you shall also see."

In the following year one of the sisters would be fifteen years old, but how about the others? Each was a year younger than the one before, so the youngest would have to wait five whole years before it would be her turn to come up from the bottom of the sea and see what our world is like. But each promised to tell the others what she had seen and what she had thought the most remarkable on the first day; for their grandmother did not tell them half enough, and there were many things they wanted to know about.

But none of them was so full of longing as the youngest, just the one who had the longest to wait and was so silent and thoughtful. Many a time she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark blue water where the fishes dashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars; of course, they shone quite faintly, but at the same time they looked twice as large through the water as they look to us. When something like a dark cloud glided across, she knew that it was either a whale swimming overhead, or else a ship with many people on board, who certainly never dreamt that a pretty little mermaid stood below and stretched

her white arms up towards the keel of their vessel.

And now the eldest princess was fifteen years old and might rise to the surface of the sea. When she came back she had hundreds of things to tell about, but the nicest of all, she said, was to lie in the moonshine on a sandbank in the calm sea, and to see close by the shore the large town where the lights were twinkling, like hundreds of stars, to hear the music and the noise and bustle of carts and men, to look at the many church towers and spires, and to hear the bells ringing. It was just because she could not go ashore that she longed so for all these things.

Oh! how the youngest sister listened. And afterwards, when she stood in the evening at the open window, and looked up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city with all its noise and bustle, and even fancied she heard the church bells ringing.

The next year the second sister had leave to mount up through the water and swim where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was going down and she thought the sunset the prettiest sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, she said, and the beauty of the clouds was beyond description. Red and violet, they had sailed right over her; but far quicker than they, a flock of wild swans had flown, like a long white veil, right over the place where the sun stood. She also swam towards the sun, but it sank, and the rosy gleam

left behind was soon swallowed up by the sea and the clouds.

A year after that the third sister came up to the surface. She was the boldest of them all, so she swam up a broad river which ran into the sea. She saw pretty green hillocks covered with vines; castles and country houses peeped forth from lovely woods; she heard the birds singing, and the sun shone so that she frequently had to duck down under the water to cool her burning face. In a little creek she came upon a whole swarm of human children; they were running about quite naked and splashing in the water. She wanted to play with them but they ran away in terror, and a little black beast came up. It was a dog, but she had never seen a dog before; it barked so savagely at her that she was frightened and sought the open sea again. But never could she forget the lovely woods, the green hills and the pretty children who could swim in the water although they had no fishes' tails.

The fourth sister was not so bold. She remained out in the middle of the sea and said that was nicest of all; for you could see for miles and miles around, and the sky above looked like a large glass bell. Ships she had seen too, but far away, and they looked like sea-mews; the merry dolphins had turned somersaults and the great whales had squirted water up through their nostrils, so that it seemed as if hundreds of fountains were playing all round.

And now came the turn of the fifth sister. Her birthday was in the winter, and therefore she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea had quite a green color and round about floated huge icebergs; each looked like a pearl, she said, and yet was far larger than the church towers which human beings built. They had the strangest shapes and glittered like diamonds. She had placed herself on one of the largest, and all the vessels had scudded past in terror while she sat there and let the wind flutter her long streaming hair; but towards evening the sky became overcast, it thundered and lightened, while the dark sea lifted the large icebergs high up so that they shone in the strong glare of the lightning. All the ships took in their sails; distress and horror reigned, but she sat calmly on her iceberg and watched the lightning as it zigzagged into the troubled sea.

The first time any of the sisters rose to the surface of the water she was always enraptured with the new and beautiful things she saw, but afterwards, when, as grown-up girls they had leave to go above whenever they chose, they became quite indifferent to such trips. They longed for the deep water, and in about a month would say that it was nicest down below, for there one felt so thoroughly at home.

Very often in the evenings the five sisters would entwine their arms and rise in a row to the surface of the water. They had beautiful voices, sweeter than any human voice, and when a gale

was blowing and they had reason to believe a ship might be lost, they would swim before the vessel and sing sweetly of the joys to be found at the bottom of the sea, and bid the sailors not be afraid to come down. But the sailors could not understand their words; they fancied the sound was the howling of the storm, nor did they ever see any of the beautiful things below, for when the ship sank the crew were drowned and only their dead bodies reached the Sea-King's palace.

Now when her sisters thus rose arm in arm through the sea, the little sister would remain below alone looking up after them, and she felt as if she must cry; but mermaids have no tears and so suffer all the more.

"Oh, if only I were fifteen!" said she. "I know that I shall love the world above and the men who live there."

And at last she *was* fifteen years old.

"Well, now at last we have *you* off our hands," said her grandmother, the widow of the late king. "Come here and let me dress you like your sisters." And she placed a wreath of white lilies in her hair, but every petal was the half of a pearl, and the old lady commanded eight large oysters to cling fast to the Princess's tail to mark her high rank.

"But they hurt me so!" said the little mermaid.

"Yes, but one must suffer a little for the sake of appearances," said the old lady.

Oh, how gladly the little mermaid would have torn off all this finery and laid aside her wreath;

the red flowers from her garden suited her much better; but she dared not do it. "Farewell!" she said and rose, light and bright as a bubble, up to the surface of the water.

The sun had just sunk as she raised her head above the sea, but the clouds were still pink and gold, and in the midst of the pale sky sparkled the evening star, so clear and lovely. The air was mild and cool and the sea as still as a mirror.

A large black ship with three masts lay upon it; only a single sail was up, for not a breath of wind stirred and the sailors were sprawling about on the masts and rigging. Music and singing were going on, and as the evening darkened hundreds of gay-colored lamps were lit, looking as if the flags of all nations were waving in the air. The little mermaid swam close up to the cabin window, and every time the water raised her she would peep in through the panes and could see many finely-dressed people. The handsomest was certainly the young Prince with large black eyes. He could not be more than sixteen years old, and this was *his* birthday and that was why they were having all this merriment. The sailors danced upon the deck, and when the young Prince stepped up, more than a hundred rockets rose into the air; they shone as bright as day, so that the little mermaid was frightened and dived down beneath the water. But she soon popped up her head again and then it seemed as if all the stars of heaven were falling down upon her. Never had she seen such fireworks; large suns spun round

and round, throwing out sparks, splendid fiery fishes dashed about in the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea. On the ship itself it was so light that you could clearly see every rope and spar and every person. And oh! how handsome the young Prince looked, as he pressed people's hands and laughed and smiled while the music resounded through the lovely night.

It grew late, but the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship and the handsome Prince. The many-colored lanterns were put out; no more rockets rose into the air, and no more salvos were fired; but from deep down in the sea there came a murmuring and a roaring. Still she sat upon the water, rocking up and down with it so that she could look into the cabin. But now the ship took a swifter course; one sail after another was spread; the billows rolled higher and there came lightning from far away.

A frightful storm was coming on; that was why the sailors reefed the sails. The huge ship pitched to and fro as it flew across the raging ocean; the water rose like great black mountains, seeming as if they would roll right over the masts, but the ship dived like a swan between the billows and then rose again on the towering waves. The little mermaid thought this grand sport, but not so the sailors. The ship strained and cracked, the thick planks bent under the repeated shocks of the sea, the mast snapped in the middle like a reed, and the ship heeled over on her side while the

water rushed into the hold. And now the little mermaid saw that they were in danger, and she herself had to beware of the spars and wreckage of the ship as they drove along upon the water. For a moment it was so pitch dark that she could see nothing at all, but when a flash of lightning came it was bright enough for her to see everything on the ship. Everybody there was tumbling about in all directions. She looked especially for the young Prince and as the ship went to pieces, saw him sink into the deep sea. She was quite pleased, for now he would come down to her, but then it occurred to her that human beings cannot live under the water and that he would be dead by the time he reached her father's palace. Die he must not, oh no! So she swam among the spars and planks which drifted on the sea, quite forgetting that they might crush her. Then she ducked beneath the water, and rising again on the billows managed at last to reach the young Prince, who by now was scarcely able to swim any longer in the raging sea. His arms and legs began to fail him, his beautiful eyes were closed, he must surely have died if the little mermaid had not come to his assistance. She held his head above the water and then let the billows drive them together wherever they pleased.

When morning dawned the storm passed, but not a fragment of the ship was to be seen. The sun rose red and beaming from the water; the Prince's cheeks regained the hue of life, but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his

lofty handsome brow and stroked back his wet locks. He looked just like the marble statue down in her little garden; she kissed him again and longed that he might live.

And now she saw in front of her the mainland, with lofty blue mountains, on the summits of which the snow shone as though great flocks of white swans lay there. Near the shore were lovely green forests and in front stood a church or convent, she did not exactly know what—but it was a large building of some sort. Lemon and orange trees grew in the garden, and in front of the gate stood tall palm-trees. The sea formed a little creek here, it was quite calm but very deep, right up to the cliff where the sea had washed up the fine white sand; thither she swam with the handsome Prince and laid him on the sand, taking great care that his head should lie higher than his body in the warm sunshine.

And now the bells in the large white building started ringing, and a number of girls came walking through the garden. The little mermaid swam farther out behind some lofty rocks which rose out of the water, covering her hair and breast with sea-foam that no one could see her face. There she watched to see who would come to the poor Prince.

It was not long before a young girl came that way; she was quite frightened when she saw him, but only for a moment. Then she brought a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the Prince came to life again, and smiled on those

around him. But he did not send a smile to her, for of course he did not know that she had saved him. She felt so grieved that when he was carried away into the large building she dived down under the water full of sorrow and sought her father's palace.

She had always been silent and thoughtful, but after this she became still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen when she went above for the first time, but she would tell them nothing.

Many a morning and many an evening she rose to the spot where she had last seen the Prince. She saw how the fruits of the garden ripened and were plucked; she saw how the snow melted on the lofty mountains, but the Prince she did not see, and every time she returned home more and more sorrowful. Her only consolation was to sit in her little garden and fling her arms round the pretty marble statue which was so like the Prince. But she did not attend to her flowers at all; they grew as if in a wilderness right over the paths and wreathed their long stalks and leaves among the branches of the trees till it was quite gloomy beneath their shade.

At last she could endure her sorrow no longer, but told her story to one of her sisters, and so all the others got to know it; and then it reached the ears of a couple of other mermaids, who told it to nobody but their closest friends. One of these happened to know who the Prince was and all about him; she also had seen the merry-making

on board the ship and knew whence he came and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister!" said the other Princesses, and with their arms round each other's shoulders, they rose in a long row out of the sea in the place where they knew the Prince's palace stood. This was built of a light yellow glistening stone, with broad marble staircases, one of which reached straight down to the sea. Gorgeous gilded cupolas rose above the roof, and between the columns which went round the whole building stood marble statues which looked like living beings. Through the lofty windows you looked into magnificent rooms hung with costly silk curtains and tapestries, and all the walls were adorned with large pictures, so that it was a pleasure to look at them. In the midst of the principal room splashed a large fountain, the jets of which rose high into the air towards the glass cupola, through which the sun shone down upon the water and the beautiful plants which grew in the basin.

So now she knew where the Prince dwelt, and many an evening and many a night she rose upon the water. She swam much nearer to the land than any of the others had ventured to do; nay, she went up the narrow canal, under the marble balcony which cast a long shadow across the water. Here she used to sit and gaze at the young Prince, who fancied he was quite alone in the bright moonshine.

Many an evening she saw him sail in his splendid boat with banners waving and music playing;

she would peep from among the green rushes, and when the wind played with her long silvery white veil and people caught sight of it, they took it to be a swan spreading its wings.

Many a night, too, when the fishermen were trailing their nets by torch-light, she heard them speaking of the young Prince, and praising him so highly that she was more than ever glad that she had saved his life when he was drifting on the billows. And she remembered how his head had rested on her breast, and how ardently she had kissed him; but as he knew nothing of all this, he could not even dream about her.

So she got to love mankind more and more, and to long more and more to be among them. Their world seemed so much grander than her own; why, they could fly across the sea in ships, ascend the lofty mountains high above the clouds, and the lands they called their own extended with their woods and meadows farther than her eye could reach.

There was much she would have liked to know, but her sisters were not able to answer her questions. She therefore asked her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very correctly called the lands above the sea.

"If men do not get drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live forever? Don't they die as we do down here in the sea?"

"Yes," said the old dame, "they also must die; and indeed their life is shorter than ours. We can live and be three hundred years old, but when at

last we cease to be, we become mere foam upon the water, and are not even buried among our dear ones. We have not immortal souls; we never enter upon a new life; we are like the green rushes, if once they be cut down, they cannot grow again. Men, on the other hand, have souls which always live—even after the body has been buried in the earth; they rise up through the clear air, to the shining stars. Just as we rise out of the sea up to the lands of men, so their souls mount to beautiful unknown regions of which we shall never catch a glimpse."

"Why have we not an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid sorrowfully. "I would give all the hundreds of years I may have to live to be a human being but for a single day that so I might hope to live in the world above the sky!"

"You must not bother your head about that," said the old grandmother; "We have a much better and happier lot than mankind above."

"So I shall die and scud away like foam upon the sea, hear no more the music of the billows, and see no more the pretty flowers and the red sun. Can I then do nothing at all to win an immortal soul?"

"No!" said the old grandmother, "only if a man grew to love you so dearly that you were more to him than father or mother, if he clove to you with all his heart and soul, and let the priest lay his right hand in yours and vowed to be faithful to you here and in all eternity, then his soul would flow over to your body and you would have

a share in the bliss that comes to human beings. He would have given you a soul, and yet have kept his own. But that can never be! The very thing that is so pretty in the sea, here, your fish's tail, is looked upon as hideous on earth because they know no better. Up there one must have a couple of awkward things called legs to be thought handsome!"

Then the little mermaid sighed and looked sorrowfully at her fish's tail.

"Let us be content with our lot," said the old grandmother, "and hop and skip about to our hearts' content in the three hundred years we have to live in. Upon my word we have a nice long time of it. We'll have a Court ball this very evening!"

It was indeed a gorgeous sight, such as one never sees on earth. The walls and ceiling of the vast dancing-hall were of glass, thick but clear. Many hundreds of huge shells, rosy-red and grassy-green, were hung in rows on each side, full of blue blazing flames which lit up the whole room and shone right through the walls, so that the sea around was bright for quite a long distance. Countless fishes, both small and great, came swimming past the glass walls; the scales of some of them shining purple red, while others sparkled like gold and silver.

Through the great ball-room flowed a broad stream, and on this the mermen and the mermaids danced to their own pretty songs. Such lovely voices are unknown on earth. The little

mermaid sang the sweetest of them all and they applauded her loudly; for a moment her heart was glad, for she knew that she had the loveliest voice of all creatures on the earth or in the sea. But soon her thoughts turned once more to the world above her; she could not forget either the handsome Prince or her sorrow at not possessing, like him, an immortal soul. So she presently stole from her father's palace, with its mirth and melody, and sat sadly in her little garden.

Here she heard a bugle sounding down through the water and she thought, "Now I know *he* is sailing up above there—he whom I love more than my father or mother, to whom the thoughts of my heart cleave and in whose hands I would willingly lay my life's happiness. Everything will I venture to win him and an immortal soul! While my sisters are dancing within my father's palace, I will go to the sea-witch; I have always hitherto been afraid of her, but, perchance, she may help and advise me."

So the little mermaid went right out of her own part of the sea towards a raging whirlpool behind which the sea-witch dwelt. She had never gone that way before. No flowers nor sea-grasses grew there; only the bare gray sandy bottom stretched out towards the whirlpool where the water, like a rushing mill-stream, eddied round and round, dragging everything it caught hold of into the deep. She had to go right through these buffeting whirlpools to reach the sea-witch's domain, and here, for a long stretch, there was no

other way than across hot bubbling mire which the witch called her turf-common. Behind this stood her house in the midst of a most strange wood. All the trees and bushes were polypi—half animal, half vegetable—they looked like hundred-headed serpents growing out of the ground; all their branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like supple snakes, and they were twisting and twirling from the roots through every joint to the outermost tips of their branches. Everything in the sea which they could catch hold of they wound themselves about and never let go again. The little mermaid was quite terrified and remained standing there, her heart thumping for fear. She was very near turning back, but then she thought of the Prince and of the human soul, and her courage came back. She bound her long flowing hair close to her head, so that the polypi might not seize it; then she crossed both hands over her breast, and darted through the water as only fishes can, right between the hideous polypi, which stretched out their long supple arms and fingers after her. She saw that nearly every one of them still held something which it had gripped with hundreds of little fingers as strong as iron bands. Men who had perished in the sea and sunk far down peeped forth from the arms of the polypi in the shape of white skeletons. Ships' rudders and coffers too they held fast; there were also the skeletons of land animals and even a little mermaid whom they had caught and crushed to death, and that was to her the most terrible sight of all.

And now she came to a large slimy open swamp in the wood, where large fat water-snakes were wallowing and showing their ugly whitish-yellow bellies. In the midst of this space a house had been built from the bones of shipwrecked men; and here sat the sea-witch, letting a toad eat from her mouth just as men allow canary-birds to pick sugar. She called the hideous fat water-snakes her chicks and let them creep all over her large spongy bosom.

"I know what you want!" said the sea-witch; "you're a fool for your pains! Nevertheless you shall have your own way, for you will get into trouble, my pretty Princess. You want to be rid of your fish's tail, eh? and to have a couple of stumps to walk about on as men have, so that the young Prince may fall in love with you, and you may get him and an immortal soul into the bargain!"

With that, the witch laughed so loudly and horribly that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, where they lay wriggling about.

"You have come in the very nick of time," said the witch; "if you had put it off till tomorrow, at sunrise, I should not have been able to help you for another year. I will brew you a potion, and you must swim to land, sit on the shore, and drink it all before sunrise. Then your tail will split and shrivel up into what men call nice legs; but it will hurt, mind you, for it will be like a sharp sword piercing you. All who see you will say that you are the loveliest mortal they ever saw. You

will keep your elegant floating gait, no dancing girl will be able to move so lightly as you; but every stride you take will be to you like treading on sharp knives till the blood flows. If you still choose to suffer all this, I have the power to help you."

"I do," said the little mermaid with a trembling voice; she thought of the Prince and of winning an immortal soul.

"But remember," said the witch, "once you have a human form you can never become a mermaid again! You will never be able to dive down through the water to your sisters or return to your father's palace; and if you should fail to win the Prince's love so that, for your sake, he forgets father and mother and cleaves to you with all his soul, and lets the priest join your hands and make you man and wife, you will not obtain an immortal soul! The very first morning after he has married another your heart will break and you will become mere foam upon the billows!"

"Be it so!" said the little mermaid, but she was as pale as death.

"But you must pay me too," said the witch, "and it will not be a small thing either that I demand. You have the loveliest voice of all things here at the bottom of the sea, and you fancy you will enchant him with that, I know; not at all, for you must give that voice to me. I choose to have your best possession in return for my precious potion, for have I not to give you of my own blood

in it, so that the potion may be as sharp as a two-edged sword?"

"But if you take my voice," asked the little mermaid, "what have I left?"

"Your lovely form," said the witch, "your light gait and your speaking eyes, you can fool a man's heart with them, I suppose? Well! have you lost courage, eh? Put out your little tongue and I will cut it off in payment, and you shall have the precious potion!"

"Be it so, then!" said the little mermaid, and the witch put her kettle on the fire to brew the magic potion. "Cleanliness is a virtue," said she, and she scoured out the cauldron with the snakes, which she tied into a knot for the purpose; then she gashed herself in the breast and let her black blood drip down into the cauldron. The steam that rose from it took the strangest shapes, so that one could not look at them without anguish and terror. Every moment the witch put something fresh into the cauldron, and when it was well on the boil it made a noise like a weeping crocodile. At last, when the drink was ready, it looked like the clearest water!

"Here you are!" said the witch, and cut out the tongue of the little mermaid; so that she was now quite dumb, and could neither sing nor talk.

"If the polypi grip you as you go back through the wood," said the witch, "just throw a single drop of this potion over them, and their arms and fingers will burst into a thousand bits!" But the

little mermaid had no need to do this; the polypi shrank from her in terror when they saw the potion, which shone in her hand like a dazzling star. So very soon she got through the wood, the swamp and the raging whirlpool.

She could see her father's palace; the lights in the long dancing-hall had been put out; all within were doubtless asleep; but she dared not visit them now that she was dumb and was about to go away from them for ever. Her heart felt as if it must burst asunder for sorrow. She stole into the garden, plucked a flower from each of her sister's flower-beds, threw a thousand kisses towards the palace, and ascended again through the dark blue waters.

The sun had not yet risen when she saw the Prince's palace, and mounted the splendid marble staircase. The moon was shining bright and beautiful. The little mermaid drank the sharp burning potion, and it was as though a two-edged sword pierced right through her body; she moaned with agony and lay there as one dead.

When the sun rose over the sea she woke and felt a sharp pang; but right in front of her stood the handsome young Prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her so intently that she cast her own eyes down and saw that her fish tail had disappeared, and that she had the prettiest little white legs; but she was quite naked, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The Prince asked who she was and how she had come thither; but she could only look at him with her dark blue

eyes mildly and sadly, for speak she could not. Then he took her by the hand and led her into the palace. Every step she took was, as the witch said it would be, as if she were treading on points of needles or sharp knives, but she willingly bore the pain, and holding the Prince's hand mounted the staircase as light as a bubble, so that he and everyone else was amazed at her light and graceful movements.

She was now arrayed in the most costly garments, all silk and muslin. None in the whole palace was so lovely; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Lovely slave-girls, clad in silk and gold, came and sang to the Prince and his royal parents; one of them sang more sweetly than the rest, and the Prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This troubled the little mermaid. She knew that she herself had sung far more sweetly, and she thought: "Oh, that he might know that for the sake of being near him I have given away my voice forever!"

Then the slave-girls danced some light and graceful measures to the loveliest music. At this the little mermaid lifted her lovely white arms, raised herself on the tips of her toes, and floated lightly across the floor as none had ever done before. Every movement made her loveliness more apparent and her eyes spoke more deeply to the heart than did ever the songs of the slave-girls.

Everybody was enchanted with her, especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling, and she danced more and more, though every time her

feet touched the floor it was as if she trod on a sharp knife. The Prince declared that she should always be with him, and she was given leave to sit outside his door on a velvet cushion.

Presently he had her dressed in a male costume that she might ride out with him. They rode together through the fragrant woods, where green branches touched their shoulders and little birds sang among the fresh green leaves. She clambered with the Prince right up the high mountains, and although her tender feet bled so that others saw it, she only laughed at the suffering and followed him till they saw the clouds sailing below them like flocks of birds departing to a foreign land.

At night, in the Prince's palace, while others slept, she would go out on the broad marble steps, for it cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of the friends she had left in the depths below.

One night her sisters rose up arm in arm; they sang so sorrowfully as they swam in the water. She nodded to them, and they recognized her, and told her how miserable she had made them all by going away.

After that, they visited her every night, and once she saw, a long way off, her aged grandmother, who had not come up above the sea for many years, and the Sea-King with his crown upon his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but dared not come so close to land as did her sisters.

Every day she became dearer to the Prince; he loved her as one might love a dear, good child; but to make her his queen never entered his mind. Yet his wife she must become, or she would never obtain an immortal soul, but would melt to foam on the morning of his wedding another.

"Do you love me most of all?" the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to ask when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair brow.

"Yes, you are dearest of all to me," said the Prince, "for you have the best heart. You are the most devoted to me, and you are just like a lovely maiden I once saw but shall never see again. I was on a ship which was wrecked, the billows cast me ashore near a holy temple, where many young girls were worshipping. The youngest, who found me on the sea-shore and saved my life, I only saw twice; she is the only one I could love in this world, but you are like her, you almost drive her image from my soul; she belongs to the holy temple, and therefore my good fortune has sent you to me instead, and we will never part."

"Alas! he knows not that it was I who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I bore him right over the sea to the wood where the holy temple stands, I sat beneath the foam and looked to see if any one would come; I saw the pretty girl whom he loves better than he does me!" And the mermaid drew a deep sigh, for weep she could not. "He says the girl belongs to that holy temple, that she will never come forth into the

world, and that they will never meet again. I am with him, I see him every day, I will cherish and love him, and sacrifice my life to him!"

But now came talk that the Prince was to marry and would take the lovely daughter of the neighboring king, and that was why he now set about fitting out a splendid ship. "The Prince is traveling to see the land of the neighboring king," was said; but everyone knew it was really to see the neighboring king's daughter that he went forth with such a grand retinue.

The little mermaid shook her head and smiled; she knew the Prince's thoughts better than did all the others. "I must travel," he had said to her, "I must see this beautiful Princess; my parents require it of me; but they shall not force me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the lovely girl in the temple whom you are like. Should I ever choose me a bride, it would rather be you, my dumb foundling with the speaking eyes!" And he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long hair, and laid his head close to her heart while she dreamt of human bliss and an immortal soul.

"Surely you are not frightened at the sea, my dumb child!" said he, as they stood on the fine ship which was to carry him to the land of the neighboring king. And he talked to her of storm and calm, of the strange fishes of the deep, and what the divers see down there, and she smiled, for she knew better than anyone else about the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight nights, when all on board were asleep save the man at the helm, she sat at the side of the ship and looked down through the clear water and seemed to see her father's palace. High above it stood the old grandmother with her silver crown on her head, staring up at the ship's keel through the contrary currents. Then her sisters came up to the surface of the water, and gazed sadly at her and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them, smiled, and would have told them that she was well and happy, but the cabin-boy drew near at that moment and her sisters dived beneath the waves, so that she half fancied the white things she had seen were but the foam upon the waters.

The next morning the ship sailed into the port of the neighboring king's splendid capital. The church bells were ringing; trumpets sounded from the tops of the high towers, and soldiers stood drawn up with waving banners and flashing spears.

Every day now brought a fresh feast or entertainment. Balls and assemblies followed in rapid succession, but the Princess was not yet there, for she had been brought up in a holy temple far away, they said, where she had learnt all the royal virtues. At last she arrived.

Full of eagerness, the little mermaid stood there to see her loveliness; and she had to recognize that a more beautiful face she had never seen. Her skin was transparently fine, and from

behind the long dark lashes smiled a pair of dark blue, faithful eyes.

"It is you!" cried the Prince, "you who saved me when I lay like a corpse on the sea-shore!" And he embraced his blushing bride. "Oh! I am so happy, I don't know what to do!" said he to the little mermaid. "The very best I dared to hope has come to pass. You too will rejoice at my good fortune, for you love me more than them all!" And the little mermaid kissed his hand, but she felt already that her heart would break. Yes, his bridal morn would mean death to her, and she would be changed into sea-foam.

All the bells were ringing, and heralds rode through the streets to proclaim the espousals.

Perfumed oil burned in precious silver lamps upon every altar. The priest swung their censers, and the bride and bridegroom gave each other their hands and received the bishop's benediction. The little mermaid, dressed in cloth of gold, stood there and held up the bride's train, but her ears did not hear the festal music, nor did her eyes see the sacred ceremony; she thought of her night of death, of all that she had lost in this world.

The same evening the bride and bridegroom went aboard the ship. Cannons roared and flags waved, and on the deck was placed a royal bridal tent of cloth of gold and purple and precious furs.

The sails swelled out in the breeze, and the ship glided lightly over the ocean. When it grew dark,

colored lamps were lit, and the sailors danced merrily on the deck. The little mermaid could not help thinking of the first time she had risen above the sea, and seen the same gaiety and splendor. She whirled round and round in the dance, skimming along as the swallow skims when it is pursued, and everyone applauded her, for never before had she danced so beautifully. There was a piercing as of sharp knives in her feet, but she heeded it not; the anguish of her heart was far more piercing. She knew this was the last evening she would ever be able to see him for whom she had forsaken relatives and home, sacrificed her lovely voice, and suffered endless tortures day by day, without his having even dreamt of it. It was the last night on which she was to breathe the same air as he, to look upon the deep sea and the star-lit sky. An eternal night, without a thought, or a dream, awaited her; for she had no soul and could not obtain one.

All was joy and gaiety on board the ship till long past midnight, and all the time she laughed and danced with the thought of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his lovely bride and she toyed with his black hair, and arm in arm they went to rest in their splendid tent.

It grew dark and all was still on board; only the steersman stood there at the helm. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the railing and looked towards the east for the rosy dawn; the first sunbeam, she knew well, must kill her. Then

she saw her sisters rise up from the sea, and they were as pale as she. Their long fair hair streamed no longer in the breeze; it had all been cut off.

"We have given it to the witch to secure help that you may not die to-night! She has given us this knife; look how sharp it is! Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the Prince's heart, and then, when his warm blood sprinkles your feet, they will again close up into a fish's tail, and you will be once more a mermaid, and may sink through the water to us, and live your three hundred years before you become dead, salt sea-foam. Hasten then! Either he or you must die before sunrise. Our old grandmother has sorrowed so that her hair has fallen off, as ours has fallen off beneath the witch's shears. Kill the Prince and come back to us! Hasten! Do you not see the red streaks yonder in the sky? A few more minutes and the sun will rise and you must die." And they heaved a deep sigh and sank beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew aside the purple curtains from the tent, and saw the beautiful bride asleep with her head on the Prince's breast. She bent down and kissed his fair brow; then looked up at the sky where the red dawn grew brighter and brighter. Then she gazed at the sharp knife, and again turned her eyes on the Prince, who, in his dreams, called his bride by name; she alone was in his thoughts. The knife quivered in the mermaid's hand. Should she strike? Another moment and she cast it far away in the waves. They shone red where it fell, as if drops of blood gur-

gled up from the water. Once again she gazed with aching eyes at the Prince, then plunged from the ship into the sea, and felt her body dissolving into foam.

And now the sun rose out of the sea; its rays fell with gentle warmth upon the cold sea-foam, and the little mermaid did not feel the pangs of death. She saw the bright sun, and above her hundreds of beautiful transparent shapes were hovering. She could still catch a glimpse of the white sails of the ship and of the red clouds in the sky.

The voice of the shapes was all melody, but so ethereal that no human ear could hear it, just as no human eye could see them; they had no wings, but their very lightness poised them in the air.

The little mermaid saw that she now had a body like theirs, and it rose higher and higher from out the foam.

"To whom have I come?" cried she, and her voice sounded like the voices of the other beings, so ethereal that no earthly music could possibly equal it.

"To the daughters of the air," answered they; "a mermaid has not an immortal soul, and can never have one unless she wins a man's love; her eternal existence depends upon a Power beyond her.

"The daughters of the air, likewise, have not an immortal soul, but they can obtain one by their good deeds.

"We fly to the hot countries, where the sultry,

pestilential air destroys the children of men; there we waft coolness and spread the fragrance of flowers through the air to heal and refresh.

"When for three hundred years we have striven to do all the good in our power, we obtain an immortal soul and share the eternal destinies of the human race. You, poor little mermaid, have striven after good with your whole heart; like us, you have suffered and endured, and raised yourself into a spirit of the air. Now, therefore, you, too, can win for yourself an immortal soul after three hundred years of good deeds."

And the little mermaid raised her bright arms towards the sun, and for the first time felt tears in her eyes.

There were life and bustle on board the ship again; she saw the Prince and his beautiful bride seeking her, and then gazing sadly down upon the bubbling foam, as if they knew she had plunged into the billows.

Unseen by either of them, she kissed the bride's forehead, smiled upon the Prince, and rose with the other children of the air up to the rosy clouds which were sailing the sky.

"For three hundred years we shall float and float and float till we glide right into God's kingdom."

"Yes, and we may get there still sooner," whispered one. "Unseen we enter the houses of men where there are children, and every day we find a good child who gladdens his parents' hearts, and deserves their love, God shortens our time of

trial. The child does not know when we fly through the room, but when we can smile with joy over it a whole year is taken from the three hundred.

"But whenever we see a bad and ill-behaved child we shed tears of sorrow, and every tear adds a day to our time of trial!"

The Tinder Box

A soldier came marching along the high road. Left, right! left, right! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, for he had been to the wars and was now returning home.

Then he met an old witch on the highway; she was ugly and her underlip hung down to her chin.

"Good evening, soldier," said she; "what a fine sword you have, and a big knapsack, too; you are a proper sort of soldier! You shall have as much money as you like."

"Thank you, old witch!" said the soldier.

"You see that large tree?" said the witch, pointing to a tree which stood close beside them. "It is quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, and then you will see a hole through which you can let yourself right down into the tree. I will fasten a rope round your body so that I may draw you up again when you call out."

"But what am I to do down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Get money!" said the witch. "When you get to the bottom of the tree you will see a large passage; it is quite light, for hundreds and hundreds of lamps burn there. Presently you will come to three doors; you can open them all, for the keys

are in them. When you enter the first chamber, you will see in the middle of the floor a large chest, on top of which sits a dog with eyes as large as teacups. But you need not mind him. I will give you my blue-striped apron to spread on the floor; then march briskly up to the dog, seize him, place him on my apron, open the chest and take as many pieces of money as you please. They are of copper, the whole lot of them; but if you would rather have silver, you need only go into the next chamber. There sits a dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels. But never mind him. Put him on my apron and help yourself to the money. If, however, you would prefer gold, you can have that also—as much of it as you can carry, by going into the third chamber. But the dog that sits on the money-chest in that room has eyes each of which is as big as a tower. He is something like a dog, I can tell you! But never mind him. Just put him on my apron and he won't hurt you a bit, and then you can take out of the chest as much gold as you like."

"It doesn't sound so bad," said the soldier. "But what am I to give you, old witch?—for you mean to have something out of this for yourself, I know."

"No," said the witch, "I won't have a single penny. The only thing I ask you to do is to bring me an old tinder box which my grandmother forgot when she went down there."

"All right! Let me fasten the rope round my body," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue-striped apron."

So the soldier climbed the tree, let himself plump down into the hole, and found himself, as the witch had said he would, in a large passage where hundreds and hundreds of lamps were burning.

And now he unlocked the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as large as teacups and glared at him.

"You're a pretty fellow!" said the soldier putting him on the witch's apron, and taking as many copper coins as he could cram into his pockets. Then he locked the chest, put the dog on top of it again, and went into the second chamber. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You shouldn't stare at me so much," said the soldier, "you might injure your eyesight!" And with that he placed the dog on the witch's apron, but when he saw the heaps of silver money in the chest he flung away all the copper money he had and filled his pockets and his knapsack with nothing but silver.

Then he went into the third chamber. Now this was truly hideous. The dog in that room really had two eyes each one of which was as large as a tower, and they ran round in his head like clockwork.

"Good evening!" said the soldier, and touched his cap, for a dog like that he had never seen before. But after looking at him a little longer, "Come, come," thought he, "I've stared enough

now, surely!" and lifting him down on to the floor he opened the chest.

Gracious! what a lot of gold was there! Why, with that money he might have bought the whole of the town, and all the sugar pigs of all the stall-women there, together with all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world! Yes, there was money, and no mistake!

So the soldier threw away all the silver pieces he had filled his pockets and his knapsack with, and took gold instead—and he filled not only his pockets and his knapsack, but his cap and his shoes so that he could hardly walk. Then he lifted the dog on to the chest again, banged the lid, and bawled up the tree, "Draw me up now, old witch!"

"Have you got the tinder box?" asked the witch.

"Oh!" cried the soldier. "I had clean forgotten it," and he went back and fetched it. The witch then drew him up, and he stood again on the highway, with his pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap crammed with gold.

"What are you going to do with this tinder box?" asked the soldier.

"That doesn't concern you," said the witch. "You've got your money, haven't you? Now give me the tinder box, that's all I want."

"Rubbish!" said the soldier. "Will you tell me this instant what you want with it, or I'll draw my sword and cut your head off!"

"No," said the witch, "I won't!"

The soldier at once struck her head off, and there she lay. He then tied up all his money in her apron, slung it over his shoulder, put the tinder box in his pocket, and walked straight to the town.

It was a pretty town, and he put up at the nicest inn, demanding the very best rooms they had and the food he liked most, for now he was rich—he had lots and lots of money.

To the servant who cleaned his shoes it seemed absurd that so rich a gentleman should have such shabby old shoes, but he had not yet had time to buy new ones.

Next day he got proper walking boots and some really beautiful clothes. So the common soldier had now become a fine gentleman, and the people told him all about their town and its riches and splendor, and about their King, and what a charming daughter he had.

"Where can one get a peep at her?" asked the soldier.

"You can't see her at all," they said; "she lives in a large copper castle with walls and towers all around it. None but the King may go in and out of it to see her, for it has been foretold that she will marry a mere common soldier, and the King cannot endure the thought of that."

"Would that I might but see her!" thought the soldier; but of course this was quite out of the question.

And now he lived right merrily, went to the theatre, drove in the King's park, and gave lots

of money to the poor, which was very handsome of him. He knew indeed, of old, how bad it was to be without a penny. But now he was rich and had fine clothes, and plenty of friends who all said what a fine fellow he was, and what a perfect gentleman, and the soldier was very pleased to hear this said.

But as he was paying and giving money away every day, and none was coming in, he at last found that he had only two pennies left, and was obliged to leave the grand rooms where he had been living, and make the best of a little garret under the roof, where he had to clean his own boots, and even to mend them with a darning needle. And now not one of his friends came to see him—they did not like going up so many stairs.

One very dark evening, he had not money enough even to buy himself a light, when it occurred to him that there might be the fag end of a candle in the tinder box he had picked up in the hollow tree when the witch had helped him down. So he took out the tinder box and the candle stump, but no sooner had he struck a spark from the flint than the door flew open and the dog with eyes as big as teacups, whom he had seen down in the tree, stood before him and said, "What does my lord command?"

"Well, I never!" said the soldier. "It will be a useful sort of tinder box if I can get whatever I want! Bring me some money," said he to the dog, and whisk! it was gone—whisk! and it was

back again, holding in its mouth a large bag full of copper coins.

And now the soldier understood what a very fine sort of tinder box it really was. If he struck the flint once, there came the dog who sat on the chest full of copper coins; if he struck twice, in came the dog who watched the silver money; and if he struck thrice, there appeared the dog who minded the gold.

So the soldier went downstairs again to his handsome rooms, bought some more fine clothes, and all his old friends immediately recognized and made much of him.

One night he fell thinking: "How ridiculous it is that one cannot get a peep at the Princess! Everyone says how lovely she is, but what is the good of that if she is to mope away all her days in the big copper castle with the many towers? Can't I get to see her somehow? Where's my tinder box?" So he struck a spark, and whisk! there stood the dog with the eyes as big as tea-cups.

"I know that it is midnight," said the soldier, "but I should very much like to see the Princess, if it were only for a moment!"

The dog was off at once, and before the soldier had time to think about it, he reappeared with the Princess. She lay asleep on the dog's back, and was so lovely that anyone could see at once she was a real Princess. The soldier could not let well alone. Kiss her he must, for he was a true soldier.

The dog then ran back with the Princess. But next morning, when the King and Queen were having breakfast with her, the Princess said that she had dreamed such a strange dream in the night about a dog and a soldier. She had ridden on the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

"A very pretty story truly!" said the Queen.

And now one of the old ladies-in-waiting was set to watch by the Princess's bed next night to see if it were really a dream or what else it could be.

The soldier longed very much for another glimpse of the Princess, so the dog came again at night, took her, and ran away with all its might. But the old lady-in-waiting put on waterproof boots and ran just as quickly behind them. When she saw them disappear into a large house, she thought, "Now I know where it is," and marked a great cross on the door with a piece of chalk. Then she went home and lay down, and the dog also came back that way with the Princess; but when he saw that a cross had been marked on the door where the soldier dwelt, he took a piece of chalk and marked crosses on *all* the doors in the town, so that the Court dame could not possibly find the right one.

Early in the morning the King and the Queen, the old Court dame and all the Court officials, came to see where the Princess had been taken.

"It must be here!" said the King, when he saw the first door with a cross upon it.

"No, it is there, my dear husband!" said the

Queen, pointing to the second door with a cross upon it.

"But there is one here, and there is one there!" cried all the courtiers. Wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors. So they soon saw that it was no good searching farther.

But the Queen was a wise woman, who could do much more than merely ride out in a coach. She took her large gold scissors, snipped a large piece of silk into small bits and sewed them into a pretty little bag; this she filled with small fine grains of buckwheat, fastened it to the Princess's back, and when this was done, she cut a little hole in the bag so that the grains might dribble through along the whole way the Princess went.

At night the dog came again, took the Princess on his back, and ran with her to the soldier, who had grown so fond of her that he longed to be a Prince that he might have her as his wife.

The dog did not notice how the grains were dribbling all the way from the Palace to the soldier's dwelling, as he ran right up the wall with the Princess; so in the morning the King and Queen saw at once where their daughter had been; and they had the soldier seized and put him into prison.

There he sat. Ugh! how dark and horrid it was, and they said to him, "Tomorrow you shall be hanged!"

This was not a pleasant thing to hear, especially as he had forgotten his tinder box and left it at

the inn. In the morning he could see through the iron bars of the little window all the people hastening out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beating and saw the soldiers marching. Everyone was running that way as fast as they could. Among them was a cobbler's lad with his leather apron and slippers; he was running at such a rate that one of his slippers flew off right against the wall where the soldier was peeping between the iron bars.

"Hi! you cobbler-lad, don't be in such a hurry!" cried the soldier. "Nothing will take place till I arrive, but if you will just run over to where I have been living and fetch me my tinder box, you shall have five copper pieces; but you must go as quickly as your legs will carry you." The cobbler's lad wanted the money very much, so off he ran for the tinder box, gave it to the soldier, and —yes, now you *shall* hear something!

Outside the town a large gallows had been erected, and round about it stood the soldiers and thousands of people. The King and Queen sat on a beautiful throne right opposite the Judge and the whole Council.

The soldier already stood on the ladder, but just as they were about to throw the cord round his neck, he observed that it had always been the custom for a criminal to be granted one innocent wish before he suffered death. He would so much like, he said, to smoke a pipe of tobacco —it was, after all, the last pipe he would ever smoke in this world!

The King did not like to say "No" to that, and so the soldier took out his tinder box and struck a light—once—twice—and thrice. And there came all the dogs, the one with eyes as big as tea-cups, the one with eyes as big as mill-wheels, and the one with eyes as big as towers.

"Save me from being hanged!" said the soldier, and with that the dogs rushed upon the Judges and the whole Council, took some by the legs and others by the nose and flung them up high into the air so that they fell down and were dashed to pieces.

"I won't have it!" said the King; but the largest dog took both him and the Queen and hurled them ever so much farther than all the others. Then the soldiers grew frightened and all the people cried, "Good soldier, you shall be our King and marry the pretty Princess!"

So the soldier sat in the King's carriage, and all three dogs ran in front and barked, "Hurrah!" The boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came out of the copper castle and became Queen, and really very much liked it. The wedding feast lasted eight days, and the dogs sat at table and made big eyes and stared with all their might.

The Princess and the Pea

There was once a Prince who was bent upon marrying a Princess, but it was to be a *real* Princess. So he roamed the whole world over to find such a one, but there was always something wrong. Of Princesses there were enough and to spare, but he could not make up his mind as to whether they were *real* Princesses; there was always something that was not quite as he felt it ought to be. So home he came again, and was much distressed, for he absolutely yearned after a real Princess.

One evening there was a terrible storm. It thundered and lightened, the rain poured in torrents —it was positively dreadful! Then there came a knocking at the city gate, and the old King went and opened it.

A Princess stood outside, but oh, what a fright she looked in the rain and wet weather! The water dripped down her hair and clothes, and ran into the tips of her shoes and out again at the heels. Yet she said she was a real Princess.

"Indeed! We'll see about that presently," thought the old Queen. She said nothing, but went into her bedroom, took off all the bedclothes, and laid a pea at the bottom of the bed. Then she took twenty mattresses, laid them above

the pea, and finally on top of the mattresses she put twenty eider-down quilts.

There the Princess was to rest that night.

In the morning the Queen asked her how she had slept.

"Oh, horribly!" said the Princess. "I have scarcely had a wink of sleep all night. Heaven knows what there was in my bed! I have been lying on something hard, for my whole body is black and blue! It is perfectly frightful!"

So they could see at once that this was a real Princess, for she had felt the pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down quilts. No one but a real Princess could have had such delicate feeling as that.

Then the Prince married her for now he was quite sure she was a real Princess; and the pea was preserved in the cabinet of curiosities, where it may still be seen, if no one has taken it away.

The Candles

There was a large wax-light which had a very good opinion of itself.

"I was born in wax and shaped in a mould," it said; "I shine better and burn longer than other lights; my place is in the chandelier or the silver candlestick!"

"That must be a delightful existence!" said the tallow-candle. "I am only of tallow, only a dip, but I always console myself with the reflection, that at any rate, I am something more than a rush-light; *that* is only dipped twice, whereas I am dipped four times to give me my proper thickness. I am quite satisfied; no doubt it is luckier and more genteel to be born in wax and not in tallow, but one does not order one's place in the world. *They* get into the glass chandelier in the dining-room. I remain in the kitchen, but the kitchen is a good place too; the whole house gets its food thence."

"But there is something more important than food," said the wax candle. "Society! To see people shine and to shine one's self! There will be a ball here this evening. Now you'll see that I and all my family will be sent for immediately!"

Scarcely had this been said when all the wax-

candles were sent for, but the tallow-candle came along with them also. The lady of the house herself held it in her dainty hand and carried it into the kitchen; there stood a little lad with a basket which was filled with potatoes and a couple of apples were there too. All this the good lady gave to the poor boy.

"And there's a candle for you as well, my little friend!" said she; "your mother sits and works right through the night; she can make use of it!"

The little daughter of the house stood close by and when she heard the words "right through the night," she said with heartfelt joy: "I shall be up all night, too; we are going to have a ball, and I shall have my large red bows on." How her face beamed! It was joy! No wax candle can shine like those child-eyes!

So the tallow candle was laid beneath the basket-lid and the boy went away with it.

"I wonder whither I am going now!" thought the candle. "I am on my way to poor people; perhaps I shall get a brass holder, while the wax-candle sits in silver and sees the most elegant people. How delightful it must be to shine before the grand folk. But it is my lot to be tallow, not wax!"

And the candle came to the poor people, a widow with three children in a little low room right opposite the rich house. "God bless the good lady for what she gave!" said the mother; " 'tis really a lovely light! It may last the whole night." And the candle was lit.

"Fut-foi!" it spluttered. "That *was* a nasty-smelling sulphur-match she lit me with! That's not the sort of thing they would be likely to offer the wax-candle in the rich house over the way!"

There, too, candles were lit, they shone over the street; the carriages rumbled along with the smartly dressed ball-guests and the music sounded.

"Now they are beginning over there," said the tallow-candle, and it thought of the little rich girl's beaming face, more beaming than all the wax lights. "I shall never see *that* sight again!"

Then the smallest of the children of that poor house came in; a little girl. She put her arms round the necks of her brother and sister; she had something very important to tell them, so important that it must be whispered: "This—evening—we—are—going—to—have—only fancy!—we—are—going to—have—*hot potatoes!*"

And her face beamed with delight; the candles shone right upon it; it saw there a joy, a happiness, as great as in the rich house yonder where the little girl had said, "We are to have a ball this evening! and I shall have the large red bows on!"

"Is it such a great thing to have hot potatoes!" thought the candle; "there's just as much joy among the little ones here as over there!" And it sneezed on the strength of it, that is to say it spluttered, which is as much as a tallow-candle *can* do. The table was laid, the potatoes were eaten. Oh! how nice they tasted! It was quite a banquet, and everyone got an apple into the bar-

gain, and the smallest child of all said the following little verse:

"Thou God so good, my thanks to Thee
That Thou hast given food to me! Amen."

"Wasn't that nicely said, mother?" exclaimed the little one immediately afterwards.

"You must not ask or say such things!" said the mother, "you should merely think upon the good God who has fed you!"

The little ones were got to bed, were kissed and went straight off to sleep and the mother sat and sewed till late into the night to make both ends meet both for herself and for them. And the candles shone from the rich house over the way, and the music sounded. The stars twinkled over all the houses, as brightly on the poor as on the rich: there was no difference.

"That was a good evening after all's said!" opined the tallow-candle. "I suppose the wax-candles had a better time of it in the silver candlestick! I should so like to know that before I burn down to the socket!" And it thought of the pair of happy children, the one that was lit by the wax-candle and the one that was lit by the tallow-candle!

The Snow Queen

In Seven Stories

First Story—Which Tells of the Mirror and the Splinters

Look! Now we'll begin. When we have got to the end of the story, we shall know more than we do now, for it was a wicked gnome, it was the very worst of the lot, it was, in fact, the Evil One himself.

One day, when he was in a good humor, he made a looking-glass which had this peculiarity, that everything good and fair which mirrored itself therein vanished into next to nothing, but what was of no good, or was foul to look upon, stood right out and became still worse. In this mirror the loveliest landscapes looked like cooked spinach and the best men became ugly or stood upon their heads; faces were so distorted that no one could recognize them, and anyone who had a freckle might be quite certain that it would appear as if it ran right over nose and mouth. If a good pious thought passed through a man's mind, such a grimace would appear in the mirror that the Evil One laughed fit to split at his cunning invention.

All those who went to the Gnome School kept by the Evil One proclaimed far and wide that a

miracle had happened; now, at last, said they, one could see how the world and mankind really looked. They ran about with the mirror till there was not a land or a person which had not been distorted on its surface.

And now they wanted to fly up to Heaven itself and make fun of the angels. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more broadly it grinned—in fact, they could scarcely hold it. Higher and higher they flew, nearer to the sun, and then the mirror shook so frightfully that it flew out of their hands and plunged down upon the earth, where it was smashed into millions and billions of pieces.

Thus it worked even more mischief than before, for some of the pieces were no larger than grains of sand, and these flew about the world, and whenever they got into people's eyes there they stayed and people saw all things distorted or had eyes for nothing but what was improper in a thing, for every tiny grain of glass possessed the same power that the mirror had as a whole. Some men even got a little looking-glass splinter in their hearts, and the result was shocking, for their hearts immediately became like lumps of ice. Some of the splinters were so large that they were used for window panes, but it was not right to view one's friends through these panes. Other pieces were made up into spectacles, and when people put such spectacles on to see better and be fair and just, a pretty mess they made of it. The Evil One laughed till his sides shook, the whole

thing tickled him so deliciously. But yet other little splinters flew up into the air, as you shall presently hear.

Second Story—A Little Boy and A Little Girl

In a large city where there were so many houses and men that there was no room for everyone to have a little garden of his own, so that most people had to be content with flowers in pots, there were nevertheless two poor children who had a garden a little bigger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but their parents dwelt close to one another; in two little rooms close under the roofs where the roof of a neighboring house joined on to theirs. A gutter ran all along beneath the eaves. In each house was a little window; one had only to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

Each family had outside a large wooden box, in which they grew pot herbs for their own use, and a little rose tree. There was one in each box and they grew splendidly. The two families now hit on the plan of placing the boxes crossways over the gutter, so that they nearly reached from one window to the other and looked exactly like two flower-beds. The tendrils of the plants hung down over the boxes and the rose-trees shot forth long branches round the windows and leaned over to one another; it was almost a triumphal arch of flowers and leaves. As the boxes were very high and the children knew they must not climb up to

them, they got leave to sit on their small stools beneath the rose-trees, and there they played together prettily and happily.

In winter this pleasure ceased. The windows were often frozen, but then they warmed copper pieces on the stove, laid the hot coin on the frozen pane, and then there was such a nice round hole to peep through. Behind the hole peered such a nice gentle eye, one from each window; it was the little boy and the little girl looking at each other. He was called Kay and she was called Gerda. In summer they could get at each other with a single step; but in winter they had first to go down a lot of stairs and then up another lot of stairs.

Outside, the snowflakes were falling.

"'Tis the white bees swarming!" said the old grandmother.

"And have they a queen bee?" asked the little boy, for he knew there is always a queen bee among real bees.

"That they have!" said the grandmother. "She flies where they swarm the thickest. She is the biggest of them all and she never rests still upon the earth but flies up again in the black cloud. On a winter's night she flies through the streets of the town and peeps in at the windows, and then they freeze into all sorts of odd shapes and look like flowers."

"Yes, I have seen that!" said both the children, and they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Let her come if she dares," said the boy; "and I'll put her on the stove and she will melt."

But the grandmother smoothed his hair and told them other tales.

In the evening, when little Kay was in his own room and half undressed, he crept up on to the chair by the window and peeped out of the little hole; a few snowflakes were falling and one, the largest of all, remained lying on the corner of one of the flower-boxes; as he watched, the snowflake grew larger and larger till at last it became a full-grown lady, clad in the finest white gauze, that seemed to consist of millions of starry crystals. She was fair and fine, but of ice—dazzling, sparkling ice. Yet she was alive; her eyes sparkled like two bright stars, but there was no rest or peace in them.

She nodded towards the window and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened and sprang down from the chair; and then it was as if a huge bird flew past the window outside.

Next day there was a hoar-frost—then it thawed—and at last the spring came. The sun shone, the green things peeped forth, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the children again sat in their little garden high up on the roof above all the other storeys.

The roses blossomed very beautifully that summer. The little girl had learnt a hymn and in it

there was something about roses, and these roses made her think about her own, and she sang the hymn to the little boy and he sang it with her:

"The roses bloom but one short hour, then die,
But the infant Jesus ever lives on high."

And the little ones held each other by the hands, kissed the roses and looked up at God's bright sunshine and talked as if the Child Jesus were there. What beautiful summer days they were; it was so delightful to be near the sweet rose-trees, which seemed as if they would never cease blooming.

Kay and Gerda sat looking at their picture-book of birds and beasts, when, just as the church clock struck five, Kay suddenly cried out, "Oh, it stabbed me in the heart, and now I have something in my eye!"

The little girl threw her arms round his neck; he blinked with his eyes, but there was nothing to be seen in them.

"I think it has gone," said he, but gone it had not. It was one of those bits of glass which had sprung from the mirror, the magic mirror, you recollect, that nasty glass which made everything great and good look ugly and petty, but made the bad and disagreeable stand out plainly, while every fault in a thing was immediately seen. Poor Kay had also got an atom right in his heart. Soon it would become like a lump of ice. At present it did no harm, but it was there.

"Why do you cry?" he asked. "You'll only make

yourself ugly. There's nothing amiss with me! Fie!" he cried suddenly, "this rose is gnawed by a worm, and look! that one is quite crooked! They are really very ugly roses, after all. They are like the boxes they stand in!" And he gave the boxes a kick and tore off two of the roses.

"Kay! what are you doing?" cried the little girl, and when he saw her dismay he tore off yet another rose and ran back to his own window and away from sweet little Gerda.

When she came afterwards with the picture-book, he said it was only fit for babies, and when his grandmother told them tales, he would be sure to come out with a "*but* -nay" whenever he was able. He would go behind her, put on her spectacles and imitate her talk; it was so exactly like her that people used to laugh when they heard him. Soon he could imitate the talk and gait of all the people who lived in the street. Everything that was odd and not nice about them Kay could imitate, and so folk began to say, "That lad has a head upon his shoulders, there is no doubt about it!" But it was the piece of glass in his eye and the piece of glass in his heart that made him tease even little Gerda, who loved him with her whole soul.

His games were now different from what they had been; they were more like a grown-up person's amusements. One winter's day, as the snowflakes were whizzing down, he came with a large magnifying-glass, held the lappet of his coat out and let the snowflakes fall upon it.

"Now look through the glass, Gerda!" said he, and every snowflake was much bigger and looked like a splendid flower or a ten-cornered star; it was such a pretty sight!

"Look how lovely it is," said Kay, "it is much more interesting than to have to do with real flowers! And there is not a single flaw in them, they are exact. If only they wouldn't melt!"

Shortly afterwards came Kay with big gloves on and his sled at his back. He bawled into Gerda's ear, "I have leave to drive about in the great square where the others are playing," and off he went.

Down in the square the boldest lads tied their sled fast to the farmer's carts and thus drove a good distance with them. It was jolly fun.

When the play was at its height a large sled came driving along. It was painted white and in it sat a person wrapped round in a fleecy white pelisse with white fleecy hood; the sled drove round the square twice and Kay quickly tied his little sled to it and so dashed along with it. It went quicker and quicker right into the next street. The driver turned his head and nodded in a friendly way to Kay; it was just as if they were old acquaintances. Every time Kay would have unfastened his little sled, the driver nodded again, and so Kay remained sitting where he was and they drove right out of the city gates.

Then the snow began to pour down so that the little boy could not see an inch before his nose as he rushed along. Presently he slipped the rope

to get loose from the large sled, but it was of no use; his little vehicle clung fast, and away they went like the wind. Then he screamed out loudly, but no one heard him; the snowflakes still fell and the sled still flew along; now and then the sleds gave a leap as if they were going over hedges and ditches. He grew frightened, and would have said "Our Father," but he could only recollect his multiplication table.

The snowflakes grew bigger and bigger; at last they looked like large white hens. All at once they sprang on one side; the large sled stopped and the person who was riding in it got up. Her pelisse and hood were of snow; and he saw a tall and slender lady of dazzling whiteness—and this was the Snow Queen.

"We have made good progress," said she, "but it is freezingly cold, isn't it? Creep in under my bear-skin mantle!" and she took him into the sled with her and wrapped her pelisse round him; it was as if he sank into a snowdrift.

"Are you still freezing?" she asked, and then she kissed him on the forehead. Ugh! the kiss was colder than ice; it went right to his heart, half of which indeed was ice already; he felt as if he must die—but only for an instant. After that he was well again; he no longer felt the cold all round about.

"My sled! don't forget my sled!" That was the first thing he thought of. It was tied to one of the white hens and flew on after the sled upside

down. The Snow Queen kissed Kay once more and then he forgot little Gerda and his grandmother and every one at home.

"And now you'll get no more kisses," said she, "for I might kiss you to death!"

Kay looked at her. She was so fair. A wiser, lovelier face he could not imagine. She did not seem to be of ice, as when she had sat outside the window and beckoned to him. In his eyes she appeared perfect, and he did not feel in the least frightened.

He told her that he was good at mental arithmetic, including fractions, that he knew the area in square miles of all countries and how many inhabitants they had, and she smiled at all he said. And then he bethought him that what he knew was not enough after all and he looked up into the vast sky, and she flew with him, flew right up into the black clouds, and the storm sighed and moaned as if it were singing old, old songs. They flew over wood and tarn, over sea and land; down beneath them roared the cold blast, the wolves howled, the snow sparkled and away over it flew the black, cawing crows; but high above them shone the moon, large and bright, and Kay gazed at it throughout the long, long, winter night. In the daytime he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

Third Story—The Flower Garden of the Dame who Knew Magic

But how fared it with Gerda when Kay came

no more? And where was he? Nobody knew, nobody could make it out at all. The boys merely said that they had seen him fasten his little sled to a splendid big one which turned into a side street and went out of the city gate. Nobody knew where he was; many tears flowed, and Gerda wept deep and sore. Then people said that he was dead, that he had fallen into the river which ran close by the town. Oh! the winter days were long and dark and dreary.

At last came the spring and the sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it!" said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone!" said she to the swallows.

"We don't believe it," answered they, and at last Gerda did not believe it herself.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning. "Kay has never seen them, and then I'll go down to the river and ask about him!"

It was quite early; she kissed her old grandmother, who was asleep, put on the red shoes and went alone out of the city gate to the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow? I will give you my red shoes if you will let me have him back again."

It seemed as if the waves nodded strangely. Then she took off her red shoes, the most precious things she had, and cast them both into the flood, but they fell close to the shore and the little waves at once bore them back to her. It was as if the river would not accept the most precious

things she had, especially as it really had not got little Kay to give in exchange. But now she fancied she had not cast the shoes out far enough, and so she crept into a boat which lay among the rushes, went to the farthest end of it and then threw the shoes again. The boat was not bound fast and at the movement glided from the shore. She perceived this, but before she could get back the boat was out in the stream and gliding swiftly along.

Then Gerda grew frightened and gave herself up to weeping, but no one listened to her but the sparrows, and they couldn't carry her back to land. But they flew along the banks and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drifted with the stream. Gerda sat in her bare stockings; her red shoes floated after her, but they could not reach the boat, it went so much faster.

It was beautiful on both banks, lovely flowers and old trees and meadows with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to Kay!" thought Gerda, and so she plucked up her spirits, sat up and looked for many hours at the pretty green banks. Presently she came to a large cherry garden, where there was a little house with wonderful red and blue windows, a straw-thatched roof and two wooden soldiers outside who presented arms to all who sailed by.

Gerda called to them. She fancied they were alive, but, naturally, they did not reply; she came

close to them, and the current drove the boat towards the shore.

Gerda called still more loudly and out of the house came an old, old woman who leaned upon a crooked stick; she had a large straw hat on her head, and it was painted with the loveliest flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you get out on the big, strong stream that has carried you so far into the wide world?" So the old woman went into the water, hooked the boat with her stick, brought it ashore and lifted Gerda out.

Gerda was glad to find herself on dry land again, and yet was a little afraid of the strange old dame.

"Come and tell me who you are and how you got here!" said she.

Gerda told her everything, and the old woman shook her head and said: "Hm! hm!" When Gerda had told her everything and asked if she had not seen little Kay, the dame said he had not yet passed that way, but he would come right enough. She must not give way to grief but taste her cherries and look at her flowers, which were prettier than any picture-book; every one of them could tell a story of its own. So she took Gerda by the hand, and they went into the house and the old woman locked the door.

The windows were very high up and the panes of glass were red, blue and yellow, so that the daylight seemed to have all the colours of the

rainbow. But on the table stood the loveliest cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she liked. While she was eating the old dame combed her hair with a golden comb, and her hair curled and looked beautifully glossy round the little kindly face, which looked as round and fresh as a rose.

"I have been longing for such a sweet little girl as you," said the old woman. "Now you shall see what a nice time we two shall have together." And all the while she kept combing Gerda's hair, and Gerda forgot her foster-brother Kay more and more. The old dame was versed in magic arts, but was not really wicked; she merely practised a little magic for her own amusement, and now she very much wanted to keep little Gerda. So she went into the garden, stretched her crooked stick towards the rose-trees, and, beautifully as they all were blooming, the whole sank into the black earth, so that one could not make out even the places where they had stood. The old dame was afraid that when Gerda saw the roses she would think of her own, and so remember Kay and run away.

Now she led Gerda into the flower-garden. What fragrance and loveliness were there! All imaginable flowers and of every season stood in the most gorgeous bloom; no picture-book could be so bright and gay. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry trees; then she went to sleep in a lovely bed with silk pillows stuffed with violets, and

slept and dreamed as nicely as any queen on her wedding day.

Next day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and so it went on for many days. Gerda knew every flower, but, many as they were, it seemed as if one were wanting, but she could not think which it was. As she was sitting one day, she looked up at the old dame's sun-bonnet with the painted flowers, and the loveliest of all was the rose. The old dame had forgotten to take it off her hat when she made the others go down into the ground. But that's what it is not to have one's wits about one!

"What!" cried Gerda, "are there no roses here!" and she ran among the beds and searched and searched, but there were none to be found. Then she sat down and wept, but her hot tears fell on the exact spot where the roses had sunk, and wherever the tears moistened the ground a tree immediately shot up as full of bloom as when it sank, and Gerda embraced it, kissed the roses, and thought of the lovely roses at home and of little Kay.

"Oh! how sluggish and backward I have become!" said the little girl. "Why, I ought to be finding Kay! Do you not know where he is?" she asked the roses. "Do you think that he is dead?"

"He is not dead," answered the roses. "We have just been in the earth, haven't we? Well, there are all the dead, but Kay was not there!"

"Thank you!" said Gerda, and she went to the other flowers and looked into their cups and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun, dreaming its own experience or history. Many, many were the tales Gerda got from them, but none knew anything of Kay.

And what, then, did the Lily say?

"Do you hear the drum, 'Boom! boom!' there are only two notes, always 'boom! boom!' Listen to the weeping of the women, listen to the cries of the priests. In her long red garment stands the Hindu widow on the funeral pile, the flames flicker around her and her dead husband; but the Hindu woman thinks of the living, of him whose eyes shine brighter than the flames, of him the fire of whose eyes is nearer to her heart than the flames which will soon burn her body to ashes. Can the flames of the heart die in the flames of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand it a bit!" said Gerda.

"That is my story!" said the Lily.

What did the Convolvulus say?

"Over the narrow mountain path hangs an old feudal castle; the thick ivy grows up around the old red walls, leaf by leaf, round the balcony, and there stands a lovely maiden; she bends over the trellis-work and looks down the path. No rose hangs fresher from the branches than she; no apple blossom, when the wind bears it away from the tree, is lighter than she; how the splendid silk kirtle rustles! Won't he come after all?"

"Is it Kay you mean?" asked Gerda.

"I am only telling my own story, my dream," answered the Convolvulus.

Then what did the Snow-Drop say?

"Between the trees a long board hangs on the rope; it is a swing; two nice little girls (their frocks are as white as snow and long, green, silk ribbons flutter from their hats) are swinging; their brother, who is bigger than they, stands up in the swing; he has his arm round the rope to hold on by, for in one hand he has a bowl and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing soap-bubbles; the swing rocks and the bubbles fly with pretty, shifting colors; the last of them is still hanging to the bowl of the pipe and swaying in the wind; and the swing rocks to and fro. The little black dog, as light as the bubbles, stands on his hind legs and wants to get into the swing too. It flies along, the dog plumps down, barks, and is angry; it is fooled, the bubbles burst—a swinging board, a dancing soap-bubble, that is my song!"

"What you tell me is very pretty, I can quite believe; but you say it so sadly and don't mention Kay at all. What do the Hyacinths say?"

"There were three lovely sisters, so transparent and delicate; the first had a red kirtle, the second a blue, and the third a white; hand in hand they danced by the silent lake in the bright moonshine. They were not elves, they were daughters of the earth. There was such a sweet fragrance, and the girls vanished in the wood. The fragrance

grew stronger; three coffins, in which lay the beautiful girls, glided from the thicket, right across the lake; fire-flies, like tiny candles, flew shining round about them. Do the dancing girls sleep, or are they dead? The fragrance of the flowers says they are dead; the vesper bell is tolling for them."

"You make me quite sad!" said Gerda. "Your fragrance is so strong that I cannot help thinking of the dead damsels! Alas! is little Kay really dead then? The roses have been down in the earth, and they say No!"

"Ding, dong!" rang the bells of the Hyacinths. "We are not ringing a knell over little Kay; we don't know him; we do but sing our own song, the only one we know!"

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, which shone out from among the glistening green leaves.

"You are a bright little sun!" said Gerda; "tell me if you know where I shall find my playfellow!"

The Buttercup shone so nicely and looked at Gerda again. What song would the Buttercup sing? Well, it had nothing to say about Kay either.

"The bright sun was shining warmly down upon a little farm-yard on the first day of spring. The sunbeams glided down the neighbor's white wall, and close beside it grew the first yellow flowers, shining like gold in the warm sunbeams. The old grandmother was out in her chair, her granddaughter, the poor and pretty serving-maid, came home for a short visit; she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, the gold of the heart in that blessed kiss. Gold on the mouth, gold at the

bottom of the heart, gold in the early morning. There! that's my little story!" said the Buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, I know she's longing for me, and is grieved on my account just as she was for Kay. But I'll soon come home again, and then I'll bring Kay with me. It is no good asking the flowers, they can only sing their own songs, they cannot tell me anything!" So she tied up her little frock that she might be able to run the quicker; but the Narcissus struck her on the leg as she jumped over it; then she stood still, looked at the flower, and said: "Perhaps you may have something to tell me, eh?" and she bent down over it. And what did it say?

"I can see myself! I can see myself!" said the Narcissus. "Oh! oh! how nicely I smell! Up in a little garret, half-dressed, is a little dancing girl. Now she stands on one leg, now she stands on two, she has a kick at the whole world, she is only deceit from head to foot. She pours water out of the teapot on a bit of stuff she holds; it is her bodice. Cleanliness is a good thing. The white frock hangs upon a peg, it also is washed in the teapot and dried on the roof! She puts it on, and puts on a saffron apron that the frock may look more white. Leg in the air! How she struts upon her stalk! I can see myself, I can see myself!"

"I don't care about that a bit!" said Gerda, "that's not the sort of thing you should tell me!" and she ran away to the very end of the garden.

The door was locked, but she shook the rusty

clasp till the door sprang open, and Gerda ran out with bare feet into the wide world. She looked back three times, but nobody was coming after her. At last she could not run any more and sat down on a large stone, and when she looked around her summer was over, and it was late in the autumn. She had not been able to observe this at all in the beautiful garden, where there were always sunshine and the flowers of every season.

"Dear me! what a sluggard I am!" said little Gerda. "The autumn has come! I must not rest!" and so she rose to go farther.

Her tiny feet were tender and tired, and everything about her looked so cold and raw. The long willow-leaves were yellow; the mist fell from them in drops, one leaf came down after the other; only the sloe-thorn stood there with all its fruit, so stiff it looked, enough to make one's mouth wry. Oh how heavy and grey seemed the whole wide world!

Fourth Story—The Prince and Princess

Gerda had to rest again; then there came hopping over the snow right opposite to where she sat a large crow; it had been sitting a long time, looking at her and wagging its head; now it said: "Caw! caw! Goo' day, goo' day!" It could not express itself better, but it was well disposed towards the little girl—asking her whither she was going, all so lonely, out into the wide world. The word "lonely" Gerda understood very well, and

she felt keenly how much there lay in it, so she told the crow the whole story of her life and asked if it had not seen Kay.

The crow nodded thoughtfully, and said: "May be—may be!"

"What? You really think so?" cried the little girl, and she nearly squeezed the crow to death, so fondly did she kiss him.

"Steady, steady!" said the crow. "I think it may possibly be little Kay! but he has certainly forgotten you by this time for the Princess."

"Is he living at a Princess's?" asked Gerda.

"Yes, listen," said the crow; "but I find it so hard to talk your language. If only you understood crow language, I could tell it you better."

"No, I have not learned that!" said Gerda, "I only wish I knew it."

"It doesn't matter," said the crow. "I will tell the story as well as I can, but it will be poor at best"; and so it told what it knew.

"In the kingdom where we are now dwells a Princess who is so very wise. She has read all the newspapers in the world, and forgotten them again, so wise is she. The other day she was sitting on the throne, and things might be merrier there than they are, people say, when she began to hum a tune; it was just this one—

" 'Wherefore then should I not marry?'

" 'There's something in that now!' said she, and so she determined to get married; but she wanted a husband who had something to say for himself when people spoke to him, not one who could

only stand still and look grand, for that is so tiresome. Then she had all her Court ladies brought together by the beating of a drum, and when they heard what she wanted they were ever so pleased.

" 'How very nice!' said they, 'we were thinking much the same thing ourselves the other day!' I assure you every word I say is true!" said the crow. "I have a tame sweetheart who hops freely about the Palace, and she told me all about it!"

His sweetheart was also a crow, of course, for a crow's mate is always a crow.

"The newspapers immediately came out with a border of hearts and the Princess's initials; and there were notices in them to the effect that every young man of good appearance was free to come up to the Palace and talk to the Princess, and the one who talked so that people could see that he was at ease and talked best of all, the Princess would marry!

"Yes, yes!" said the crow, "I assure you, it is as true as that I sit here. The people came crowding in, there was a racing and a squeezing, but nothing came of it either on the first day or yet on the second. They could talk well enough, the whole lot of them, in the street, but when they passed through the Palace gates and saw the guards in silver and footmen in gold all the way up the stairs, and the large rooms, so finely lit up, they were quite abashed. And when they stood before the throne where the Princess sat, they had not a word to say for themselves except the last word the Princess had said, which they repeated,

but she did not care about hearing *that* over again. It was just as if all the people had taken snuff into their stomachs and had fallen into a swoon until they got into the street again, when they at once fell a-chattering. There stood a whole row of them from the city gates to the Palace. I went inside myself to see it all!" said the crow. "They were both hungry and thirsty, but they got nothing from the Palace, not so much as a glass of water. Some of the wisest had brought bread and butter with them, but they did not share it with their neighbors; for each thought: 'Let him look hungry, and then the Princess won't have him!' "

"But Kay—little Kay?" asked Gerda. "When are you coming to him? Was he among the crowd?"

"Patience, patience! We are coming to him presently. It was the third day, and then a little person without either horse or carriage came marching jauntily up to the Palace; his eyes sparkled like yours, and he had lovely long hair, but I must say his clothes were very shabby."

"It was Kay!" cried Gerda rapturously. "Oh, now I have found him!" and she clapped her hands for joy.

"He had a little knapsack on his back!" said the crow.

"No, it must have been his sled!" said Gerda, "for he went away with his sled!"

"That may be," said the crow, "I didn't look very closely, but I heard from my tame sweetheart that when he came in at the Palace gate and saw the

guards in silver and the footmen in gold along the stairs, he was not put about the least little bit, but nodded to them easily and said: 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the staircase; I prefer to go inside!' There the great rooms were all ablaze with light; the privy councillors and excellencies went about barefooted and in nothing but gold thread; it was enough to make anyone feel solemn and respectful! His boots creaked dreadfully, but yet he was not frightened!"

"That is little Kay all over!" said Gerda. "I know he had new boots; I have heard them creak in grandmother's room!"

"Yes, creak they did indeed!" said the crow. "But he went boldly up to the Princess, who sat on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel, and all the Court ladies with their maids and their maids' maids and all the lords with their gentlemen and their gentlemen's gentlemen, who each had a a page to attend them, stood in state all around, and the closer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. As for the page of the gentleman's gentleman, who always walks about in slippers, there is no looking at him, so haughtily does he stand in the doorway!"

"It must be horrible!" said little Gerda, "and did Kay get the Princess after all?"

"If I had not been a crow, I should have taken her myself, although I am engaged already. He is said to have talked as well as I talk when I talk the crow's language. I had that from my tame sweetheart. He was bold and cheerful; he had not

come thither to woo at all, but simply to see how clever the Princess might be; and he thought well of her and she thought well of him in return."

"Yes, I am sure it was Kay!" said Gerda. "He was so clever he could do mental arithmetic and fractions! Oh, won't you lead me up to the Palace!"

"Ah, it is very easy to talk!" said the crow, "but how shall we manage it? I'll talk it over with my tame sweetheart; she will be able to advise us; but let me tell you this, such a little girl as you are will never get leave to go in!"

"Yes, I will!" said Gerda, "when Kay hears that I am there, he will come straight to me and fetch me in!"

"Wait for me by the stile there!" said the crow, and it wagged its head and flew away.

Late in the evening, when it was growing dark, the crow came back. "Caw! caw!" it said, "I am to greet you many times from her, and here is a little roll for you; she took it from the kitchen; there they have bread enough and you are certainly hungry! It is not possible for you to get into the Palace, why, you have bare feet; the guards in silver and the footmen in gold will not allow it; but don't cry, you shall come in all the same. My sweetheart knows of a little back staircase which leads to the sleeping-chamber and she knows where to find the key."

So they went into the garden, into a long alley where leaves were falling one after another. And when the lights in the Palace were put out, the

crow led little Gerda towards a back-door which stood ajar.

Oh! how Gerda's heart beat with longing and anxiety. It was as if she were about to do something wrong, and all she really wanted was to know whether it was little Kay. Yes, it must be he; she thought so vividly of his wise eyes and his long hair; she could see him smile quite plainly as when they used to sit at home together beneath the roses. He would surely be glad to see her, to hear what a long way she had come for his sake and to know how distressed they had all been at home when he did not come back. Oh, how happy and how frightened she was at the same time!

And now they were on the staircase. A lamp was burning in a little cupboard. In the middle of the floor stood the tame crow and turned its head on all sides and looked at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her.

"My betrothed has spoken so nicely of you, little miss," said the tame crow; "and your story is very touching. If you will take the lamp, I will walk ahead. We go straight on, for we shall meet no one!"

"It seems to me that someone is coming behind us!" said Gerda, and something whizzed past her. It was like shadows on a wall, horses with flowing manes and thin legs, huntsmen and lords and ladies on horseback.

"Those are only dreams," said the crow, "they come and fetch away to the chase the thoughts of

our high and mighty master and mistress. It's a good thing, too, for you will be able to see them in bed all the more safely. But remember! when you have risen to honor and dignity, show that you have a grateful heart!"

"What's the good of talking like that?" said the crow from the wood.

And now they came into the first chamber, which was of rose-colored satin with artificial flowers along the walls; here the dreams whisked past them, but they went so quickly that Gerda could not see the high and mighty master and mistress. Each room was more splendid than the one before it; it was indeed enough to bewilder anyone, and now at last they reached the sleeping chamber. The roof of it was like a large palm with leaves of costly crystal, and in the middle of the floor, on a thick gold stalk, hung two beds, which looked like lilies: one was white and in it lay the Princess; the other was red, and in that Gerda went to look for little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves aside and then she saw a brown neck —Oh, it *was* Kay! She called his name quite loudly and held the lamp towards him—the dreams, on horseback, whisked into the room again—he awoke, turned his head and . . . it was not little Kay!

It was only on the nape of the neck that the Prince resembled him, but he also was young and handsome. Then the Princess peeped forth from the white lily bed and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her whole

story and all that the crows had done to help her.

"You poor little thing!" said the Prince and Princess, and they praised the crows and said they were not at all angry with them, but that they must not do such things again. Nevertheless they should have a reward.

"Would you like leave to fly wherever you like?" asked the Princess, "or would you prefer a fixed appointment as Court crows with all the leavings of the kitchen as your perquisites?"

And both the crows bowed low and begged for a fixed appointment; for they thought of their old age and said "it was so nice to have something for the old days," as they expressed it.

Then the Prince rose up from his bed and let Gerda sleep in it; more than that he could scarcely do. She folded her little hands and thought: "How good men and animals are after all!" and then she closed her eyes and slept blissfully. All the dreams came flying in again and they looked now like angels and they drew a little sled and on it sat little Kay and nodded. But the whole thing was only a dream and vanished the moment she awoke.

Next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and was commanded to stay at the Palace and enjoy herself. But she begged instead that she might have a little carriage with a horse in front and a pair of little boots that so she might go out into the wide world again and look for Kay.

And she got not only boots but a muff; she was

nicely dressed and when she was ready to go, a new carriage of pure gold drew up before the door; the coachman, the footmen behind, and the outriders (for there were outriders also) wore gold coronets. The Prince and Princess themselves helped her into the carriage and wished her good luck.

The wild crow, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles; it sat beside her, for it could not bear traveling with its back to the horses; the tame crow stood in the gateway and flapped its wings; it did not go with them, for it had suffered from headache ever since it had got a fixed appointment and too much to eat. The carriage was well stocked inside with sugar-cubes and under the seat were fruits and ginger-bread.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the Prince and Princess, and little Gerda wept and the crow wept. And then after the first few miles the crow also said farewell, and that was the saddest leave-taking of all; it flew up into a tree and flapped its black wings as long as it could see the carriage glancing in the bright sunshine.

Fifth Story—The Little Robber-girl

They drove through a very dark wood, but the carriage shone like a flame. It glared in the eyes of some robbers and they could not withstand such a temptation.

"It is gold! It is gold!" they cried, and rushing

forward, they seized the horses, beat the little jockeys, the coachman and the footmen to death and dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is plump, and nice, and has been fattened with nut-kernels," said the old robber-woman, who had a long, coarse beard, and eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. "'Tis a morsel every bit as good as a little fat lamb! How nice she will taste!" So saying, she pulled out a bright knife and it shone so that it was positively ghastly.

"Oh!" cried the woman the self-same moment; for she was bitten in the ear by her own little daughter, who hung upon her back and was very wild and naughty.

"You loathsome brat!" said the mother, quite forgetting that she was about to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me!" said the little robber-girl. "She shall give me her muff and her pretty frock and sleep with me in my bed!" Then she bit her mother again, so that the robber-woman leaped in the air and turned round and round and all the robbers laughed and said: "Look how she dances with her cub!"

"I will have a ride in the carriage!" said the little robber-girl. She insisted upon having her own way, and had it too, for she was spoilt and obstinate. She and Gerda sat in the carriage and so they drove over thorns and tree-stumps into the depths of the forest. The robber-girl was the same size as Gerda, but stronger, with broader shoulders and a dark skin; her eyes were quite black, they

looked almost sorrowful. She put her arm round little Gerda's waist and said: "They shall not kill you so long as I am not angry with you. I suppose you are a Princess?"

"No!" said little Gerda, and she told the story of all she had gone through and said how very fond she was of little Kay.

The robber-girl looked at her solemnly, nodded her head and said, "They shan't kill you, even if I am ever so angry with you; in that case I will do it myself!" Then she dried Gerda's tears and made her put both her hands into the pretty muff, which was so soft and warm.

And now the carriage stopped; they were in the courtyard of a robber's castle; it was cracked and crannied from top to bottom; crows and ravens flew out of the gaping holes, and big bull-dogs, everyone of which looked as if he could swallow a man, leaped high in the air, but they did not bark, because it was not allowed.

In a large old smoky room, in the midst of the stone floor, blazed a large fire. The smoke rose to the ceiling and had to find its own way out as best it could. A large cauldron full of soup was simmering there and hares and rabbits were roasting on spits.

"You shall sleep tonight with me and all my little animals," said the robber-girl. "They get their meat and drink and then go off into that corner where the straw and carpets are." Over their heads, on pegs and poles, were perched

hundreds of doves, which appeared to be asleep, but began to turn about when the girls came near.

"They are mine, all of them!" said the little robber-girl, and seizing the nearest she held it by the legs and shook it so that it flapped its wings wildly.

"Kiss it!" she cried and dashed it in Gerda's face. "There sit all the riff-raff of the woods!" she continued, pointing to a number of cross-bars which were driven into a hole high up in the wall. "Those two, I say, are a couple of rascals, they would fly away at once if one had not tied them well up. And here stands my old sweetheart, Ba-ba!" She tugged at the horn of a reindeer which had a bright copper ring round its neck and was tied up. "He too must be well looked after or he will run away. Every afternoon I tickle him in the neck with my sharp knife. He is so afraid of it!" And the little girl drew a long knife out of a crevice in the wall and let it glide over the reindeer's neck; the poor beast kicked and plunged, but the robber-girl only laughed and dragged Gerda down into the bed with her.

"Are you going to keep the knife with you while you sleep?" asked Gerda, and looked at it rather anxiously.

"I always sleep with the knife!" said the little robber-girl. "One never knows what may happen. But tell me now over again what you told me before about little Kay and why you went forth into the wide world."

So Gerda told her story all over again while the wood-pigeons cooed in their cot and the other doves slept. The robber-girl put her arm round Gerda's neck, held the knife in the other hand and snored aloud; but Gerda could not close her eyes at all, not knowing whether she was meant to live or die. The robbers sat round the fire and drank and sang, and the robber-woman became quite tipsy and turned somersaults. It was a gruesome sight for a little girl to behold.

Then the wood-pigeons cried "Coo! coo! We have seen little Kay. A white hen bore his sled; he sat in the Snow Queen's carriage, which was driving through the forest as we lay in our nests. She blew upon us young ones and all died save us two: Coo! coo!"

"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen driving? Do you know anything about it?"

"No doubt she was traveling to Lapland, where there is always snow and ice. Ask the reindeer who is tied there by the cord!"

"There *is* ice and snow, and there life is indeed good and glorious!" cried the reindeer. "There one is free to skip about in the large glistening valleys. There the Snow Queen has her summer palace, but her castle is up towards the North Pole, in the island of Spitzbergen."

"Oh Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Lie still, do you hear!" said the robber-girl, "or I'll run my knife through your body!"

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said, and the robber-girl looked serious, and nodded her head saying, "'Tis all one! 'tis all one!" Then she said to the reindeer: "Do you know where Lapland is?"

"Who should know better than I?" said the beast, and its eyes sparkled. "There I was born and bred; and there I used to skip about on the snowy plains!"

"Listen!" said the robber-girl to Gerda, "you see that all our men are away, but mother is still here and here she'll stay, but towards noon she will take a drink out of her big flask and have a doze on the strength of it—and then I'll do something for you!"

She sprang from her bed, rushed towards her mother, threw her arms round her neck, pulled her beard and said, "My own sweet nanny-goat, good morning!" And her mother tweaked her nose till it became red and blue, but all that was pure affection.

Now when the mother had drunk from her flask and settled down to a little nap, the robber-girl went up to the reindeer and said: "I should enjoy above all things the pleasure of tickling you many times more with the sharp knife, for you are so comical then, but I'll loose your cord and help you to get outside so that you may run off to Lapland. But you must use your legs and carry this little girl to the Snow Queen's palace, where her playfellow is. You have heard, I suppose, what

she has said, for she talked loudly enough and you are always listening!"

The reindeer leaped for joy. The robber-girl lifted Gerda up and took the precaution to bind her fast, and even gave her a cushion to sit upon. "Here!" said she; "take your fleecy boots, for you'll find it cold, but the muff I will keep, it is so pretty! All the same you shall not freeze. Here are mother's long mittens, they will reach up to your elbows. On with them! Now your hands look like my mother's!"

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't stand your whimpering!" said the little girl. "Look happy! D'ye hear! Here are two loaves and a ham for you, so you won't starve." These things were then tied on to the reindeer; the little robber-girl opened the door, and having locked up all the big dogs, she cut the cord across with with her knife and said to the reindeer; "Off you go! But take good care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the great mittens on them towards the robber-girl and said "Good-bye." Then away flew the reindeer over bush and brake, through the great forest, over moor and steppe as fast as it could. The wolves howled and the ravens croaked. "Fizz! Fizz!" said the sky as if it were freezing red.

"Why, that is my dear old friend, the Northern Light!" said the reindeer. "See how it shines." So it ran along still faster, both night and day; the loaves were eaten and the ham too, and by that time they had got to Lapland.

Sixth Story—The Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman

They stood still before a miserable-looking little house. The roof reached to the ground and the door was so low that the family had to creep on all fours when they wanted to go out or in. Nobody was at home but an old Lapp woman who was frying fish by the light of a train-oil lamp. The reindeer told her the whole of Gerda's story, but he told his own first, for he considered it much more important, and Gerda was so benumbed with cold that she could not speak at all.

"Alas! you poor creatures!" said the Lapp woman, "why, you have a long, long way to go yet! You must go a hundred miles into Finland, for it is there that the Snow Queen lives in the summer and burns blue lights every evening. I will write a few words on a piece of dried cod (I haven't any paper) by way of introduction to the Finn woman who lives up there; she will give you better advice and information than I can."

So when Gerda had warmed herself and had something to eat and drink, the Lapp woman wrote a few words on a piece of dried cod, bade Gerda take good care of it, tied her fast to the reindeer again and then they made off with great speed.

"Fizz! Fizz!" the air seemed to say. All night long the lovely Northern Lights were burning. And so they came to Finland and knocked at the Finn woman's door.

It was hot inside, so that the Finn woman herself went about with scarcely any clothes on her back. She was little and dirty-looking. She immediately unloosed Gerda's clothes and took off her mittens and boots; else she would have found the room too hot; then she put a lump of ice on the reindeer's head, and read what was written on the piece of dried cod. She read the message three times and then she knew it by heart and put the fish in the stockpot, for it was good to eat and she never wasted anything.

The reindeer now told first his own story and then little Gerda's and the Finn woman blinked her shrewd eyes but said nothing.

"You are so wise," said the reindeer; "I know you can bind all the winds of the world with a silk thread so that when the skipper loosens one knot he gets a fair wind; if he loosens the second there's a stiff breeze, and if he loosens the third and fourth it blows so that the forests fall. Won't you give this little girl a potion that she may get the strength of twelve men and so overcome the Snow Queen!"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finn woman, "a lot of good that would be!" And she went to a drawer and brought out a large skin roll and undid it; strange characters were written thereon and the Finn woman read till the perspiration trickled down her forehead like raindrops.

But the reindeer kept begging so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked with such imploring

eyes full of tears at the Finn woman that she again began blinking and drew the reindeer aside into a corner, where she put fresh ice on its head and whispered:

"Little Kay is with the Snow Queen sure enough and finds everything after his heart and mind and fancies it is the best spot in the world, but that is because he has a glass-splinter in his heart and a little grain of glass in his eye. They must be removed first, or he will never be a human being again and the Snow Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can't you give little Gerda something which will give her power over these things?"

"I can't give her any greater power than she already possesses. Don't you see how great it is? How men and beasts must serve her and how well she has got on in the world, bare-legged as she is! She cannot receive any power from us; it lies in her heart, and is hers because she is such a sweet, innocent child. If she cannot reach the Snow Queen and remove the glass from little Kay herself, we cannot help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins and thither you can carry the little girl. Let her down by the big bush covered with red berries which stands in the snow. Don't loiter about and gossip, but hasten back hither!"

Then the Finn woman lifted Gerda on to the reindeer's back and it ran off as fast as it could.

"Oh! I have forgotten my boots and my mittens," cried little Gerda directly she was out in

the biting cold, but the reindeer dared not stop. It ran till it came to the big bush with the red berries and then it put Gerda down and kissed her on the mouth, while large, bright tears rolled down the beast's cheeks. Then it ran back again as fast as it could. There stood poor Gerda without shoes or gloves amidst the frightful, icy-cold Finland.

She ran onward as fast as she could, and was met by a whole regiment of snowflakes. They did not fall from the sky, which was clear and dazzling as the Northern Lights, but ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the bigger they grew. Gerda remembered very well how large and artfully-fashioned they had looked that time when she had looked at the snowflakes through a magnifying glass. But here they were far bigger and more dreadful, for they were alive. They were the Snow Queen's outposts, and they had the strangest shapes. Some looked like ugly hedgehogs, others like whole knots of snakes that stuck out their heads, and others again like little children with their hair standing on end. All were dazzlingly white, and all were living snowflakes.

Then Gerda repeated "Our Father," while the cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which came out of her mouth like a big cloud of smoke. This cloud of breath grew denser and denser till it took the shape of little angels, which grew bigger and bigger as they touched the ground; they all had helmets on their heads and spears and shields in their hands; they

grew more and more numerous, so that by the time Gerda had finished her prayer, a whole legion of them surrounded her. They slashed with their spears at the hideous snowflakes, so that they burst into a thousand pieces, and little Gerda went, quite boldly and safely, right through them. The angels stroked her on the hands and feet and then she did not feel the cold so much, and went briskly on towards the Snow Queen's palace.

But we must now see how it had fared with little Kay. He never thought of little Gerda at all; still less did he imagine that she was standing outside the palace at that very moment.

Seventh Story—The Snow Queen's Palace and what Happened in it

The walls of the palace were of driving snowflakes and the windows and doors were made of cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms, all like driven snow; the largest stretched away for many miles. All were lit up by the bright Northern Lights, and they were so large, so empty, so icy cold and so dazzling. Merriment never came hither; there was never so much even as a little ball for the bears, where the storm could blow its trumpet and the Polar bears could dance on their hind-legs and show off their fine manners; never so much as a little card party with smacks on the mouth and pats on the paws; never so much as a coffee-party for the white fox ladies; empty, cold and dreary were all of

the Snow Queen's rooms. The Northern Lights blazed so plainly that one could tell exactly when they were waxing highest or waning lowest in the heavens. In the midst of the empty endless hall of snow there was a frozen lake; it was broken into a thousand pieces, but every piece resembled each of the others so exactly that it was quite a work of art; and in the midst of the lake sat the Snow Queen when she was at home, and then she said that she was sitting on the Mirror of Understanding, and that it was the best mirror in the whole world.

Little Kay was blue with cold, nay, almost black; yet he did not perceive it, for she had kissed the cold shivers out of him and his heart was pretty nearly a lump of ice. He was working away at some sharp, flat blocks of ice, which he was placing together in every possible way, for he wanted to make something out of them. It was just as when we take little wooden blocks and make pictures out of them. So Kay was busy forming figures, and very clever ones too. In his eyes the figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance; that was owing to the grain of glass which still lay in his eye. He formed whole figures which were so many written words, but he could never manage to form the one particular word he wanted, which was "Eternity." And the Snow Queen had said, "If you can invent that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a pair of new skates." But he could not do it.

"Now I am going to whiz away to the warm lands!" said the Snow Queen, "I will go and have a peep into the black pots!" These were the fire-vomiting mountains, or volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, as people call them. "I will whiten them a little. It will benefit them and do good to the lemons and grapes!" And away she flew.

Little Kay sat all alone in the large empty ice hall, which was miles and miles long, and looked at the blocks of ice and thought and thought till he creaked and cracked; quite stiff and still he sat, one might have fancied he was frozen to death.

Then it was that little Gerda entered the palace through the large gate. Biting blasts were raging, but she said an evening prayer, and then the wind lay down as if it would sleep and she entered the large, cold, empty hall of ice. Directly she saw Kay, she knew him, and flung herself upon his neck, and held him fast, crying, "Kay! dear little Kay! So I have found you at last!"

But he sat still, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda wept hot tears, that fell upon his breast, penetrated to his heart, thawed the lump of ice and the little mirror-splinter inside it. He looked at her and she sang the hymn:

"The roses bloom but one short hour, then die,
But the infant Jesus ever lives on high."

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept so much that the grain of glass swam out of his eye. He knew her, and cried joyfully: "Gerda! sweet little Gerda! Where have you been so long? And where

have I been?" And he looked all about him. "How cold it is here! How vast and void it is!" And he clung tightly to Gerda, and she laughed and cried for joy. It was so blissful that the very blocks of ice danced about for joy, and when they were tired and lay down, they lay in exactly the letters of which the Snow Queen had said that he who found them should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world and a pair of new skates.

Then Gerda kissed Kay's cheeks and they grew quite rosy, she kissed his eyes and they sparkled like her own; she kissed his hands and feet and he was hale and strong. The Snow Queen might now come home as if she pleased, for his freedom stood written there with shining letters of ice.

And they took each other by the hand and wandered out of the huge palace; they talked of their grandmother and of the roses on the roof; and wherever they went the wind died down, and the sun burst forth. And when they reached the bush with the red berries there stood the reindeer awaiting them; it had brought a young reindeer with it whose udders were full of warm milk, and it gave the little ones to drink and then kissed them on their mouths. They carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finn woman, who warmed them well in the hot room and found out all about their journey home, and then to the Lapp woman, who had sewn them new clothes and got her sled ready for them.

The reindeer and the young reindeer frisked

along beside them to the very border of the land where the first green shoots peeped forth, and there the little travelers took leave of the Lapp woman and the two reindeer. "Farewell!" they all said.

And the first little birds began to twitter, the forest was full of green buds, and out of the woods on a splendid horse which Gerda recognized as having been harnessed to the gold carriage came riding a little girl with a shining red cap and with pistols in her belt. It was the little robber-girl, who was tired of staying at home and now wanted to go first northward and if that did not suit her to some other part of the world. She and Gerda at once recognized each other, and delighted they were!

"You're a pretty fellow to trudge about for!" said she to little Kay. "I wonder whether you deserve that anybody should travel to the very end of the world on your account!"

But Gerda patted her on the cheek and asked about the Prince and the Princess.

"They are traveling in foreign lands!" said the robber-girl.

"And the crow?" asked Gerda.

"The crow is dead!" she answered. "His tame sweetheart has become a widow and goes about with a bit of black thread round its leg. She complains bitterly, and it is all nonsense! But tell me how it fared with you and how you managed to find Kay!"

Then Gerda and Kay told her all that had happened.

"Snip-snap-snorum!" said the robber-girl, and took them both by the hand and promised that if ever she passed through their town she would visit them. Then she rode forth into the wide world, but Gerda and Kay went along hand in hand, and the farther they went the lovelier the spring seemed with its flowers and verdure; the church bells rang and they recognized the high tower and the large town where they lived. They went all the way to their grandmother's door, right up the steps and into the room, and everything looked the same as it used to do. The clock said: "Tick, tock!" and the hands pointed to the hour; but as they passed through the door they suddenly perceived that they were now grown-up. The roses on the roof were in full bloom and peeped in at the open window, and there stood the tiny stools they had used as children. Kay and Gerda sat down each on their own and held each other's hands while the cold empty splendor of the Snow Queen's palace was forgotten like a painful dream. The grandmother was sitting in God's bright sunshine, reading aloud from the Bible this passage: "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!"

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and now they fully understood the meaning of the old hymn:

"The roses bloom but one short hour, then die,
But the infant Jesus ever lives on high."

There they both sat—grown-up, yet children still—children at heart, and it was summer, warm, glorious summer.

Andersen's Fairy Tales

To Hans Christian Andersen might fitly be applied the title so happily bestowed by the natives of Samoa on Robert Louis Stevenson: Tusitala, the "Teller of Tales." For more than half a century the great Danish story-teller has been beloved by children in all parts of the world, and nowhere has he more devoted admirers than in Great Britain and those lands where English is the common tongue. As has been well said, "Andersen was a Norseman, and the blood of Norsemen is in our veins."

This book has been chiefly designed for younger children, only those stories have been included which are most suitable for the purpose.

For those who here make first acquaintance with Andersen, it may be well to state that he was born at Odense, in the Baltic island of Funen, on April 2, 1805. His first fairy tales were published when he was about thirty years of age. "I have written them," he wrote to a friend, "just as if I were telling them to a child." That, no doubt, was the reason of his success, though as a matter of fact the stories were not at first at all highly regarded. Po came later, and he died, greatly honored, at l try house near Copenhagen on August 4, 187

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